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EAGAN'S
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The great cancer scare, by Eliot Marshall

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

SPACE WASTE

The 'Star Wars' delusion
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NASA's big ego trip
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CORRESPONDENCE

BEAT IT, TRB

To the editors:
TRB's personal invective against Michael Jackson ("Prisoner of Commerce," April 16) made me think I was reading the *National Enquirer*, not TNR. Why should anyone's private life be held to account for his public success? The androgyny that TRB describes with almost clinical distaste is not a novelty, but an old show business tradition. It has been practiced by Liberace in the 1950s, Mick Jagger in the 1960s, and David Bowie in the 1970s. One can certainly find that "maturity" is no protection against the private agonies of many popular singers, as the tragic lives of Billie Holiday and Judy Garland show. Every individual of extraordinary talent or wealth leads a life distorted by the very factors that make him exceptional. Only voyeuristic journalism makes this an issue. What *is* important is that this "helplessly immature" young man has resurrected the popular recording industry, which has been in the doldrums since 1979.

RONALD B. LEVINE
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

To the editors:
I take exception to TRB's suggestion that defending snakes is nothing more than childish "babbling." Any critical thinker who has bothered to dwell even briefly on the matter knows how absurd the average adult's reactions are when confronted with a reptile. In his attitude toward snakes, Michael Jackson is displaying both intelligence and the capacity to transcend the cultural prejudices that restrict far too many adults. He is following in the footsteps of Thoreau and Schweitzer.

ROBERT S. PIPER
Mount Pleasant, Pennsylvania

To the editors:
You are a no-brained, STUPID jerk! My friend Alethea Garber has Michael Jackson's address and when he finds out, you don't know in how much trouble you're going to be! You better change your mind REAL QUICK and I meant what I said!

SHARON LADENSON (age 10)
East Lansing, Michigan

To the editors:
You are a stupid, monkey-faced, two-nosed, no-brained, jerk (the editor)! How dare you write about Michael Jackson (the great opposite of you) the way you did! If you don't write about Michael J. nicely in your next issue, you'll have some damage done to you (and I mean it)!

ALETHEA GARBER
Valley Stream, New York

To the editors:
Our class read TRB's article about Michael J., and I think it's the truth. I like his songs, but I think he takes hormone pills. I thank you for writing about him, because I didn't believe any other piece I read about him.

ANDREW COWAN
Versailles, Kentucky

SOFT HART

To the editors:
Morton Kondracke rebukes Senator Gary Hart in "Hart Line, Soft Line" (TNR, April 2) for believing that Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza would toss his captured political rivals to caged panthers. In his book *Somoza and the Legacy of U.S. Involvement in Central America*, Bernard Diederich, a reporter for *Time* does relate some bizarre incidents involving the Somozas. For example, in 1976, Somozan officials cut off the head of Sandinista leader Carlos Foneseca and sent it to Somoza to prove that his hated enemy was dead. Somoza's father—and predecessor as Nicaraguan dictator—also indulged in strange hobbies, according to Diederich. He liked to have calves thrown into Lake Tipitapa and watch the sharks devour them. These were the men the U.S. Marines and several U.S. Administrations supported for decades.

While these incidents may not be equal in magnitude to feeding people to panthers, I do believe Senator Hart is right: we have contributed financially

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FROM WASHINGTON

FOR CHRYSLER'S SAKE

O.K., you're a voter. What would you say to a $5 billion annual tax increase to finance a welfare program for 600,000 people making between $25,000 and $1.4 million a year? This works out to about $10,000 per welfare recipient. Not a great idea? Tell that to President Reagan, who imposed this tax in 1981; to Gary Hart, who wants to continue it; and to Walter Mondale, who actually wants to raise it. It's called the automobile import quota.

For three years now, there have been limits, ostensibly "voluntary," on the number of Japanese cars sold in this country. By eliminating price competition between American and Japanese cars, these annual quotas have added more than $1,000 to the price of both. (Remember rebates? Well, forget them.) The purpose of the quotas was to give the American auto industry a chance to gear up for the new era of international competition. Lee Iacocca of Chrysler said he wanted just a couple years of protection. After that, he swore, "free enterprise forever." Now he wants permanent, more stringent restrictions on imports. Mondale and the auto unions want a "domestic content" bill that would more or less ban imports.

The auto quota is a textbook example of the way "temporary" protectionism becomes permanent. It's about as temporary as it is voluntary. The domestic industry is not much better prepared for world competition now than it was three years ago. Meanwhile, though, it is feeling nice and cozy. Chrysler made more money in the first quarter of 1984 than in any previous entire year.

This episode also illustrates the fallacy of justifying protectionism as a response to another country's protectionism. After all, Japan is never going to be a market for American cars. Sure, they ought to be letting in more of our farm products. But the auto industry won't give up its demand for quotas when the Japanese change their minds about beef and oranges. It doesn't work like that. We're stuck with the auto quota until the political process recognizes that, like almost all protectionism, it's a bad bargain. Its value in preserving auto industry jobs is less than its cost in higher car prices and in lost jobs elsewhere. People who spend $1,000 more for a car—money that goes straight to Japan if the car's an import—have $1,000 less to spend on other things.

Among its other sins, the auto quota is responsible for the mirage that the Chrysler Corporation was "saved" at no cost to the citizenry. Mondale has made the Chrysler bailout a central issue in the Democratic Presidential campaign. He supported it; Hart didn't. Chrysler may have paid back its federally guaranteed loans, but it has not paid back the $1,000-a-car surcharge it was able to impose thanks to the quotas. For 1983 this would have been over a billion dollars—considerably more than its $700 million profits.

Furthermore, though Chrysler was saved as a corporate entity, it's not likely that any jobs were saved as a result. Almost half of Chrysler's 100,000 hourly workers were laid off in the process of its salvation. If Chrysler had gone under, its plants would not have vaporized. Whoever bought them might well have hired at least as many people as Chrysler now employs. The only job that was saved for sure by the Chrysler bailout was Lee Iacocca's. Iacocca has a preposterously swollen reputation as an industrial genius. In fact, his genius lies in two post-industrial skills: lobbying the government and public relations. For these he earned half a million dollars plus stock options last year.

The coming auto industry labor negotiations are a crossroads for American industry, and also for American liberals. The United Auto Workers Union showed restraint during the recent troubled years. Now, eyeing record industry profits and ludicrous executive salaries (over $1 million each for the chairman and president of Ford), the U.A.W. wants a piece of the action, reasonably enough. Trouble is, an American auto worker still makes $8 an hour

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ROOSEVELT AND CHURCHILL:
A TALE OF TWO MARTINIS.

Concerning affairs of state, these two great statesmen were frequently of a single mind.

But in the mixing of martinis, there was a parting of the ways.

FDR enjoyed his martini in the then-traditional manner: two parts gin to one part vermouth. Sir Winston, his friend and ally, acknowledged the traditional role of vermouth merely by glancing at the vermouth bottle as he poured the gin.

History would appear to be on Churchill's side. Which is not surprising. After all, who knows more about gin than the English?

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
MAY 14, 1984

CHINA CARD SHUFFLE

From the moment Richard Nixon downed mao-tais with the Great Helmsman in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing—and thereby banished the bitter memory of the day eighteen years before when John Foster Dulles spurned Chou En-Lai's proffered handshake at the Geneva conference on Indochina—America has been in love. And ever since Mr. Nixon's 1972 visit, each new American President in his turn has sought to consummate the romance. Ronald Reagan is no exception. The opportunity to play the Great Statesman, as the Democrats slog their way through the Great Electoral Swamp, is irresistible.

The transformation of what is now respectfully called the People's Republic of China from feared enemy (and fixture of cold war demonology) to welcome friend of the free world is one of the more startling political shifts of the final third of the twentieth century. For almost a quarter of a century, China—a.k.a. Red China, a.k.a. the Peiping regime, a.k.a. the Chicoms, a.k.a. the human-wave half of the Sino-Soviet Bloc—was ostracized as a pariah nation. Its leaders were regarded as Moscow's puppets in the quest for world domination. The Vietnam War was fought, we were told, in order to prevent the Chinese from gobbling up the whole of Asia. The falling-out with Russia was considered a clever Communist trick when it wasn't dismissed as an insignificant squabble. After all, wasn't it in the nature of communism to be monolithic?

This view of the world was, as we now know, dangerously naïve. Long-standing national rivalries and ethnic hatreds proved more enduring, in the event, than either messianic Maoism or the paranoid fantasies of the China Lobby. Vietnam and China—comrades once said to be as close as lips and teeth—today seek to give each other bloody noses. Communist Vietnam occupies Communist Cambodia, having first toppled the Communist butcher Pol Pot from power. Beijing pampers Pol Pot by supplying his men with money and munitions. (The United States, to its discredit, supports this grotesque policy.) Moscow stations 300,000 soldiers along China's northern border and trains a not inconsiderable portion of its nuclear might upon her cities. Events have shattered the theology of monolithic Marxism. Its bewildering and bloody shards are everywhere to be found.

That the United States now regards China with a certain pragmatic sobriety is all to the good. America's generation-long refusal to acknowledge what had happened in that country was an obstinate obsession that benefited Washington not at all. On the contrary, it retarded the successful pursuit of American aims in the region for decades. In recognizing Beijing the United States recognized reality, and recognized its own interests. Mr. Nixon understood this. So did Mr. Ford. So did Mr. Carter, who completed the process of normalization. And so now—after years of muttering about the "betrayal" of Taiwan, and after some embarrassing false starts at the outset of his Administration—does Mr. Reagan.

China today enjoys a unique and privileged position. No longer the land of a billion brainwashed blue ants, it is the object of intense curiosity, even celebration. It is the only major Communist power that the United States seeks to woo with significant benefits. They include military sales, economic cooperation, and cultural exchanges. It makes geopolitical sense for Mr. Reagan to do his part in strengthening this useful relationship. But it is worth offering a caution or two about the price.

The agreement on nuclear power announced in Beijing during the President's visit has about it the air of something negotiated in haste and destined to be repented at leisure. The Chinese have refused to sign the Nuclear

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Nonproliferation Treaty. It is far from clear that the nuclear materials and technology they are now due to receive from the United States will not be used for purposes less innocent than generating electricity for the bustling bicycle factories of the New China. The record of the United States with respect to nuclear proliferation has never been very good; indeed, this is one area in which the Soviet record is noticeably better. Mr. Reagan, with his concern for making the United States a "reliable supplier" of nuclear goodies, has made a bad situation worse. The deal he closed in Beijing looks pretty good for the Chinese leaders and for the American private companies that will get millions of dollars in Chinese business. It doesn't look so good for the long-term safety of the world.

By enrolling in Washington's Anti-Soviet Club, China receives many things of value. The nuclear deal is one of them. American silence on almost all issues of human rights is another.

It seems almost to have been forgotten that China remains a totalitarian one-party dictatorship. Free elections have never been held, nor are any contemplated; indeed, even to mention the subject smacks of absurdity. Freedom of religion scarcely exists; freedom of speech and assembly do not exist at all. The right to travel is severely restricted. (So is the right to have children; forced abortions are officially sanctioned.) In 1981 thirteen Roman Catholic priests and laymen were arrested for engaging in "counterrevolutionary activities under the cloak of religion," and, according to Amnesty International, for "maintaining contact with the Vatican." Secret trials are routine; to be arrested is to be presumed guilty. Mass executions are carried out immediately after "public trial rallies." Last August, Beijing's main sports stadium was the site of one such spectacle. One hundred thousand people jammed the arena to gawk while convicted criminals (a conveniently elastic category which can include "counterrevolutionaries" and "subversives") confessed and were denounced. Then, according to the State Department's 1983 human rights report, the condemned were "paraded through the city with placards around their necks specifying their crimes before they were executed by firing squads." Estimates of the number of people so dispatched last year range from a low of 3,000 to a high of 5,000. (Imagine the outcry in Washington if such things were going on in Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union!) Editors of unofficial magazines and journals regularly risk prison (or worse) for their temerity in questioning the ever-shifting party line. Detention without trial is a favored technique for silencing prickly and stubborn critics. Ren Wanding, the founder of the Chinese Human Rights Alliance, has been detained without trial for the past five years. No charges against him have ever been made public.

About all this the President is personally silent. Mr. Reagan and his advisers have sometimes spoken of "quiet diplomacy." But toward Moscow, Mr. Reagan is rarely diplomatic, and never quiet. Toward Beijing, he is entirely too diplomatic, and almost always quiet. Mr. Reagan and advisers speak also of the distinction between "totalitarianism" and "authoritarianism." The case of China shows that authoritarians are not the Administration's only friends; if it's anti-Soviet enough, a tyranny can be totalitarian and still be a pal. The standards by which the President rightly rushes to judge Moscow are too often suspended when he turns to China. Mr. Reagan is in China, according to his Secretary of State, to make America's relationship with that country "stable and comprehensive." We wish him success in that. But we also wish he would remember what sort of place China is. It is a good thing that the President denounces, loudly and often, Moscow's despicable denial of fundamental human rights. It is a good thing that the President recognizes the exemplary courage of Andrei Sakharov by setting aside a day in his honor. We have no doubt that were Mr. Reagan to journey to Moscow (in the manner of his predecessor's pioneering trip to China) he would inquire after the health of Mr. Sakharov. Will the President do the same for Ren Wanding?

NOTEBOOK

□ THE ENVELOPE, PLEASE: The winner of the 1984 National Magazine Award for Outstanding Achievement in the essays and criticism category is, yes, THE NEW REPUBLIC. This is a kind of Oscar for ink-stained wretches, given by the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and the American Society of Magazine Editors. This year's award, the first one TNR has ever won, honors three essays by our senior editor Charles Krauthammer, who joined the magazine in January 1981. The three essays are "Pseudo-Private Lives" (March 28, 1983), "The End of the World" (May 23, 1983), and "The Politics of a Plague" (August 1, 1983).

□ AND SPEAKING of awards, Christopher Dickey's article, "The Truth Behind the Death Squads," (TNR, December 26, 1983) has won the Overseas Press Club's annual Mary Hemingway Award for the best magazine reporting from abroad.

□ OUR POETRY EDITOR Robert Pinsky has just published a new collection of poems, *History of My Heart* (Ecco Press). Policy prohibits us from reviewing it in the back of the book, but we are very pleased to announce it here. We would also like to congratulate Paul Starr, a regular contributor, on winning the Pulitzer Prize and the Bancroft Prize for his book, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine* (Basic Books). Another regular contributor, of pictures rather than words, has also appeared between harder covers: David Schorr has illustrated Phyllis Rose's *Parallel Lives: Five Victorian Marriages* (Knopf).

□ MARMALADE FROM HEAVEN: "The rule is, jam tomorrow, and jam yesterday—but never jam today," the Queen of

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Hearts explained to Alice, and that does seem to be the way in this world. Not, however, for Kitty and Robert Wolf of Langhorne, Pennsylvania. The Wolfs were driving along the New Jersey Turnpike near Newark Airport last week when two cartons of Dickinson's Fancy Sweet Marmalade fell from the skies and through their windshield. The Wolfs were unharmed, but there was marmalade all over the place, according to *The New York Times* story, eloquently headlined: JAM JARS PLUNGE FROM AIRPLANE ONTO JERSEY CAR. The plane was a Boeing 727 operated by a company called Regent Air, which charges $1,600 one-way for super-luxury flights between New York and Los Angeles, including such amenities as limousine pickup and (apparently) deluxe marmalade. We've heard of trickle-down economics, but this is ridiculous.

□ FIFTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "The airplanes Nanking has been buying so lavishly are not at present being used against the Japanese but against Chinese Communists in 'Red China,' which is now an area of several thousand square miles, and according to many estimates has as many as sixty to eighty million inhabitants. The Communists have hardly any airplanes at all, and Nanking finds this sort of attack tremendously effective, so much so that its 300 fighting planes are probably more valuable to it than some 600,000 men whom we hear, from sources hitherto reliable, it has in the field. The Nanking armies don't enjoy fighting against their oppressed fellow countrymen, and sometimes whole divisions desert to the Reds. Actually, the danger that the fighting planes will ever be used against Japan seems remote, in view of the present understanding between Nanking and Tokyo; indeed, it appears more likely that some day a joint Sino-Japanese air fleet might operate against the Chinese Soviets than that Chiang Kai-shek would ever attack his wealthy and powerful Japanese friends. Japan's recently expressed annoyance over the sale of military equipment to Nanking was probably less that it was military than that it wasn't Japanese-manufactured." ("The Week," The Editors, May 16, 1934.)

Chicago's new mayor, one year later.

WASHINGTON'S CROSSING

Chicago

Once known for its monolithic machine politics, Chicago in the first year of Mayor Harold Washington's term in office has developed a reputation for wildly fractious political infighting. Columnists here now regularly refer to the city as "the Beirut of American politics." And not without reason. City council chambers have been convulsed with confrontations between Washington and Cook County Democratic Party Chairman Edward Vrdolyak. Vrdolyak, the outlines of a bulletproof vest visible through his trimly tailored suit, prowls the floor, keeping his twenty-nine aldermen in line while angry crowds of Washington supporters shout from the galleries. Washington, forcefully using his chairman's gavel, and guaranteed support of any veto by his bloc of twenty-one supporters, maintains a semblance of order but is compelled to engage in nasty, drawn-out quibbling in order to pass legislation. One day last December, while Vrdolyak was pleading with Washington for permission to make a point of order, he said sarcastically, "To someone of your gender it should be 'pretty please.' " To which Washington replied from the podium, "You're about to get a mouthful of something you don't want."

What is happening, though, is more than the dismantling of a fabled old political machine in a city that has long perversely prided itself on its venal politics. Washington's victory, based on massive new voter registration and on a reform crusade carried forward by a collective dream of black political power, gave new hopes to Democrats throughout the country. Many believed that a similar registration drive on a nationwide basis could bring in enough disenchanted political dropouts to help defeat President Reagan this year. Yet Washington's victory also exposed the deepening divisions within the Democratic Party—both locally and nationally, between blacks and whites, and between conservative and liberal whites—that may just as well doom its chances of ousting Reagan. The Democrats probably cannot beat Reagan without winning Illinois, and they probably can't win Illinois without uniting Chicago Democrats. But the question here, as elsewhere, is: Unity on whose terms?

WASHINGTON, who worked for ten years as a maverick within the machine, knows that reform is needed to crush his machine opposition and to build the coalition that he needs to govern effectively and to stay in power. Notwithstanding all the fireworks within the city council chambers, Washington combines classic good government goals—efficiency, honesty, fairness—with a commitment to affirmative action for minorities and women. Washington supports "neighborhoods" rather than "downtown"—which means a stronger emphasis on policies for the working class (Washington has always maintained his strong pro-union sentiments although now as an administrator he is very tightfisted), minorities (the city is 40 percent black and 15 percent Hispanic), and small businesses. It means an end to kowtowing to the monied establishment—although Washington has argued persuasively to business executives that his reforms are ultimately in their interest as well. It also means strengthening community organizations, reform political groups, and classic pressure groups (women, civil rights, and liberal unions) whose power can circumvent the aldermen, the machine, and their allies (such as the conservative building trades).

Fast Eddie Vrdolyak—the nickname is based not only

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on his wit and political acumen but also on his alleged ambulance-chasing as a young personal injury lawyer—put his coalition together to defend the old arrangements, where the sale of public powers to private interests underwrites the political and financial fortunes of machine politicians. And to keep his allies in line, he has played on racial fears and hostilities in white neighborhoods. Vrdolyak's defense of the machine's parochial interests undermines the Democrats' larger interests in the national and state campaigns by dividing the party's traditional coalition. But Washington has not been able to organize a movement that can either oust the old guard entirely or bridge the chasms in the party on its own.

ALTHOUGH MANY Washington supporters have been frustrated by what they see as unnecessary caution and slowness, the mayor can claim a variety of successes in reforming Chicago's government. He welcomed a court order abolishing the vestiges of patronage, a decree against which previous mayors had fought protracted court battles. Washington opened up city records, aggressively provided information to community groups, expanded popular involvement in government, and set the stage for unionizing all city employees. By cutting the city work force by 3,000 in one year, reducing many top salaries, and granting few raises, Washington got reasonably firm control over a huge inherited budget deficit. He has shrewdly instituted some other efficiency measures, like a gradual reduction of garbage crews from four to three, that will also erode the old machine base. Streets and sanitation had been a notorious haven for patronage. And new garbage dumpsters will eliminate one of the last sources of machine leverage. Traditionally machine precinct captains secured loyalty from voters by supplying free garbage cans.

This is not to say that he has avoided administrative troubles entirely. One over-zealous public housing administrator appointed by Washington started off by firing all the city's elevator repairmen for incompetence, worsening already wretched conditions in the city's high-rise housing projects. Another top political aide had to be dismissed when it was discovered that he had been convicted several times for pimping. Still, Washington's overall changes have been laudable. He has greatly increased the number of blacks and Hispanics in the administration to roughly their proportion in the city, and he has hired many more women for top jobs. Generally his choices have been top-notch—efficient apolitical technicians as well as imaginative left-liberals. Although there was much noise in the mayoral campaign about Washington's failure to file income tax returns in the 1960s, there have been no questions raised so far about his own integrity in office.

Washington has acted to deliver on promises to bring jobs to the city's neighborhoods, white as well as black and Hispanic. City purchases from local businesses, especially minority-owned, have increased sharply. Community development and capital improvement expenditures in neighborhoods have soared; the 1984 budget more than tripled expenditures for neighborhood street resurfacing, sidewalk repairs, and storefront façade improvements. The city has also worked to connect private sources of capital with local community organization projects. Beds for the homeless and food for the hungry have been increased substantially. Soon the city hopes to launch pilot neighborhood planning projects, storefront "Good Health Places" that use community volunteers for preventive medicine education, and an early warning system to spot potential factory closings as well as abandonment of apartment buildings.

With his economic development strategy, Washington is trying not only to break old machine practices but also to bridge racial divisions by strengthening the city's diversified economy rather than relying solely on downtown development. In the past, private developers asked and the city gave, with political contributions lubricating the exchange. Now the city is bargaining for "linked development." Washington is attempting to require the developer of a chic mall in the city's Navy Pier on Lake Michigan to also build a long-sought "Ethnic Village" shopping area in Marquette Park, a white area on the city's southwest side not at all friendly to Washington. In all city-backed projects, employers are being asked to sign "first source" agreements: they must at least seriously consider qualified applicants referred to them by the city's job training programs.

But the "wounded beast," as Washington called the machine a year ago, won't die without a fight. The greatest passion in Chicago has been reserved not for reforms, but for squabbling. Washington believes that Vrdolyak must go—both for the sake of reform and for Democratic Party unity. He cites the aid that Vrdolyak and other machine politicans gave to his Republican mayoral opponent, and Vrdolyak's meetings with top Reagan political aides. Vrdolyak said he was not trying to cut a deal but was simply talking about the needs of his tenth ward. Nevertheless, there are suspicions that he was seeking money not only for the machine but also to finance a group of "New Republicans"—including many disaffected Democrats—who are trying to take over the city's moribund Republican Party. Short of bolting the party, Vrdolyak wants an arrangement that preserves his own power. In one recent council exchange, Vrdolyak thanked Washington for his winnings from betting on a horse called Sweet Harold. "A better gesture would be to divide the profits," Washington quipped. Vrdolyak replied, "I've been trying to tell you for that for eleven months."

WASHINGTON CALLED for a showdown on the party committee races in the March primary. But Washington failed to organize his forces sufficiently early and effectively. The political revolution continued in the black neighborhoods, where every reformer backed by Washington (and a few he didn't openly support) ousted machine blacks. However, in four wards with a majority of blacks and Hispanics, but with white machine committeemen, only one Hispanic reformer won.

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Along the lakefront, where the white liberal swing voters live, two machine committeemen were ousted, but by candidates either loosely or not at all linked to Washington.

Washington did not win enough support on the Democratic central committee to oust Vrdolyak. A year ago the mayor thought he had an agreement with State's Attorney Richard M. Daley, son of the mayor who built the machine, but Daley was afraid to ally himself with a reform black mayor. Again this year Daley, who fought with Vrdolyak before Washington was elected, would not urge his committee supporters to vote against Vrdolyak. Now many black leaders (but not Washington) are talking about launching an independent party this fall to challenge Daley, who already faces a tough Republican opponent. The hope is that a black reformer would win and that Daley would be taught a lesson. Although a Daley alliance with Washington might give the Democrats a better chance to beat Reagan and Percy, Daley is worried that close ties with Washington will harm his political career. First things first.

Washington has gained greater public support among whites throughout the city during the past year, and Vrdolyak is so distrusted that he does not have a significant popular base. (Statewide he has the highest negative rating of any Illinois politician.) However, Washington has rejected urgings of advisers to make dramatic gestures to white neighborhoods on the city's southwest and north sides, insisting that he will do better in his quiet way—visiting neighborhood banquets and fairs, holding occasional forums, and making sure that essential city services and economic development needs are provided fairly everywhere. Washington cultivates his base, where he is most secure, but he fails to build where his grip is most precarious.

SO THE PARTY remains divided. Many of the reform committeemen candidates pledged to continue last year's remarkable registration drive, and Washington has launched his own nationwide registration project. But the Vrdolyak Democrats have little interest in greater registration of blacks, Hispanics, and young whites. Even if it would help the party win the state for the Democratic Presidential ticket in the fall, registration will only strengthen Washington's reform base. These divisions also imperil one of the Democrats' better opportunities to trim the Republican majority in the Senate as moderately liberal Representative Paul Simon takes on vulnerable incumbent Charles Percy. Some of Daley's allies, such as Representative William Lipinski, have begun publicly wondering how the party can hold many of the conservative white ethnic Democrats who already vote regularly for Republican Presidents.

A close election next November could conceivably be decided in Illinois. It would be a sad day if the future of arms control, tax reform, the makeup of the Supreme Court, and government industrial policy turned on the street battles of Chicago politics. But just as the Democrats need to figure out a way to pull together their varied national constituencies, they will need to find a way to unite a Chicago party fractured along the lines of class, race, culture, and ideology. Failing that, the sad day may come next November.

DAVID MOBERG

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The crucifix and the Star of David.

KRAKÓW WALKS

Kraków

DESPITE THE ugly concrete housing blocks that surround the town center, Kraków still gives the impression of a city slumbering in the early years of this century. In the morning, as trams clank through the streets taking factory workers home from the night shift, one can also see horse-drawn wagons making their way to the markets. Open trucks rumble by with loads of coal that are dumped unceremoniously on the sidewalks and shoveled into waiting grates for heating. The trams are heated in the same manner—each car has a small metal bin filled with hot coals. And at night the streets of the Old Town, without the parked cars, the bright streetlights, and the shiny storefronts we take for granted in the West, eerily recall some indeterminate, earlier time.

The Poles themselves think less about the early twentieth century than about the glorious years of the fifteenth and sixteenth , when Polish kings ruled from Kraków over the largest and most powerful nation in Eastern Europe. That history is very much in evidence here: the narrow cobblestone streets of the Old Town dominated by the magnificent royal castle on Wawel Hill, its somber and imposing battlements still in place, and the Mariacki church shining with its fairy-tale spires. The streets themselves, carefully spared the intrusion of concrete and glass (not to mention such capitalist inventions as advertising billboards and neon lights), have the feel of a museum display.

The displays, of course, have been carefully selected. For much of the past two hundred years, Kraków lived under Austrian rule, and the baroque Old Town bears a striking resemblance to Salzburg or Vienna. Yet nowhere is there any mention here of that earlier Austrian presence. Only in the Jewish cemetery on Miodowa Street, where assimilated Jews put up German-language gravestones before 1918, and Polish ones afterwards, can one in any way measure the influence of Austrian culture. Otherwise, like the names Stettin, Pressburg, Breslau, Carlsbad, Königsberg, and Danzig, the name Krakau has vanished

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from the city that briefly bore it, testimony to the collapse of old empires (and, in part, to the rise of a new one).

Such selectivity has relatively little to do with Communist politics and more with the weight of history. Even in Munich, the tourist hears a great deal about the old Kingdom of Bavaria, hardly anything of the regimes that followed. For its inhabitants, Kraków is completely, eternally Polish, and when the state glories in past Polish greatness (even paying mild homage to national strongman Marshall Jozef Pilsudski, the victor over the Red Army in 1920), no one complains that it is doing so—even for its own reasons. In the stores, the faces of three men abound in the small portraits, plaques, trinkets, and even on drinking glasses, testimony to Poland's much-vaunted nationalism and sense of history. They are Pilsudski; King Jan III Sobiewski, who saved Vienna from the Turks in 1683; and John Paul II. In private homes, another face often joins these three: Lech Walesa. Of course, the most ubiquitous faces in the country belong to Mary, most often in her guise as the Black Madonna of Czestochowa, the "Queen of Poland," and Jesus. Indeed, it is practically impossible to find a room in a private apartment without a crucifix or religious portrait, especially in overcrowded Kraków, where two couples often share the same bedroom. Thus the government's current attempt to remove crucifixes from Polish classrooms represents a great deal more than mere harassment. The crucifix strikes a Western visitor as the most common and powerful symbol in Polish life, one that unites family, church, and nation together far more eloquently than any secular tradition.

The Star of David is as rare as the crucifix is ubiquitous. Kazimierz is a quarter of Kraków that was once a thriving center of Eastern European Jewry. In 1945, when the Germans left, synagogues, cemeteries, bath houses, and thousands of Jewish homes stood vandalized, desecrated, and empty. Unlike Warsaw, where the Germans razed the ghetto and just about everything else, the war left Kraków relatively unscathed. So the old Jewish Quarter remains—dirty, decaying, and bearing few traces of the life of the past. Here, the selective display of history in Kraków becomes oppressive.

THE AUTHORITIES have not treated the Jewish Quarter with complete neglect. In the Old Synagogue there is a small, pretty museum devoted to the Jews of Kraków, and some of the nearby streets still bear the names of great Kraków rabbis. In addition, the Poles have recently published three picture books with lavish (so far as Polish publishing goes) illustrations of Kazimierz, Jewish cemeteries, and Polish Jewry in general. The authorities seem content enough to remember Polish Jewish life—so long as it takes the form of scattered relics and glassed-in museum exhibits.

The present-day streets of Kazimierz, however, offer only a forbidding forgetfulness. Here, one sees an old Hebrew inscription on a wall, barely visible; there, rusty grillwork with its pattern in the shape of menorahs. But there are no plaques, no signs, no prominent monuments. The old bathhouse is now a youth center; an old synagogue now holds offices. To reach the main cemetery on Miodowa Street, the visitor must turn in to an unmarked doorway and proceed through a smelly dark hall before emerging into the graveyard. There, shattered gravestones have been set into a memorial wall, and a faded sign in Yiddish and Polish warns men to keep their heads covered. (The Yiddish sign starts with the uncomfortable word *Achtung*.) The cemetery is startlingly huge, and that makes the lack of upkeep, and the lack of visitors, all the more unbearable.

In the 1950s the Polish government built the industrial town of Nowa Huta next to Kraków in an attempt (by now surely regretted) to turn this cultural center and university town into a city of proletarians. The huge smokestacks pour out bilious multicolored smoke which promptly settles down on everything in Kraków, forcing the authorities to engage in constant renovation projects that have no chance of keeping up with the rate of decay. Kazimierz does not even have renovation projects. Everywhere in Kazimierz, the buildings are grimy and decaying. And so the dirty plaster peels off the walls like dead skin, revealing the bare brick and crumbling mortar underneath.

And the streets of Kazimierz are silent, except for those ever-present Polish birds, the crows, which shriek as they whirl and dive above the buildings, tracing black arcs in the icy gray sky.

DAVID A. BELL

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The F.T.C.'s ideology isn't fool-proof.

LOVE THAT MARKET

LOVERS OF LIBERTY, take heart. President Reagan's Federal Trade Commission chairman, James C. Miller III, has officially declared the F.T.C.'s "reign of terror" at an end. No more does the officious, meddling "national nanny" intervene between the ardent 5-year-old and the beckoning TV screen. The trustbusting mania has been quelled; the consumerist impulse quieted. Economic rationality—or, at least, the new economic orthodoxy—prevails.

For three years now I have sat at the feet of the neoclassical economists who now govern the Federal Trade Commission. I've listened dutifully, and I've learned a few lessons. I've learned especially that economists, like other humans, tend to harbor biases, and that these can undermine the usefulness of their science. Chief among the reigning biases in Reagan's Washington is the passionate

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conviction that the only human vice that justifies government attention is overregulation. Demon government is the theoretical sausage casing into which all evils are stuffed. So totally does overregulation occlude the vision of our economic wise men that they overlook such commonplace evils as human misery, greed, and avarice. The result is that chronic condition which Jeremy Stone of the Federation of American Scientists has labeled "lack of empathy at a distance."

IT IS ESSENTIAL, however, to distinguish Reagan's F.T.C. economists from others who now share power in Washington. The political taxonomist can distinguish at least two classes of Reagan regulators: the corporate dally-a-year types, and the ardent free marketeers. The former are the temporary refugees whose bodies, if not souls, are on leaves of absence from their firms. The latter are the committed neoclassical economists, for the most part, free market theorists of the Chicago School.

The corporatists' guiding principle is: "whatever business wants, business gets," including the sort of regulations that simply stifle competition. The economists' motto is, rather, "Whatever business gets—without government help—it gets to keep." In power, both economists and corporatists dine with leaders of industry; but the academics, who might have consulted *for*, but were never quite *of*, the corporate culture, are less comfortable at the table. The economist's self-image is that of scientific truth-seeker. The corporatist sees himself as the agent of oppressed industry. Thus, unlike other Reagan regulators, James Miller and his colleagues at the F.T.C. are principled in their assault upon regulation. The problem is that the principles that guide them are, at best, mildly eccentric and at worse bizarre.

The first of these principles might be called, *If God really believed in market failures, he never would have made so many Chicago economists*. This axiom is customarily shrouded in econometric modeling, cost-benefit analysis, and picturesque algebraic formulae, but in essence it boils down to: marketplace, good; government intervention, bad.

Speeches and testimony by our economists admit to the possibility of market failures requiring firm government action. But like all-white or all-male private clubs which loudly abjure discrimination, our economists never quite seem to find the right candidate for a market failure in the flesh. Take merger analysis. When we are faced with a proposed merger between the third- and fourth-ranking companies in a major industry, our economists perceive this merger to be a competitive goad to Nos. 1 and 2. If America's giants, Nos. 1 and 2 in an industry, prepare to join hands, the economist perceives that the relevant geographic market is not the United States, but the world. Should the No. 1 and No. 2 breakfast cereal manufacturers in the world become betrothed, our economists decide that the relevant market is far more commodious than had been thought: egg breeders, croissant bakers, Egg McMuffin vendors, lox and cream cheese purveyors—all are shepherded into one great breakfast market in which the cereal giants will be seen to occupy only modest market shares. Even monopoly need not concern us, they say, unless there exist great "barriers to entry" to potential deconcentrators. But the only barrier to entry that ever seems to disturb our economists is a government grant of monopoly—in which case no merger issue arises. Thus the anticompetitive merger remains a receding mirage, never to be encountered in real life.

Resale price maintenance—manufacturers' forbidding retailers from offering discount prices—is another illusory market failure. Vertical price-fixing has impressed generations of Supreme Court Justices as an unambiguously bad device by which price competition among competing retailers is unceremoniously squelched. Wrong, teach the F.T.C. economists. Since all marketplace behavior is presumptively benign, our economists postulate that resale price maintenance must reflect the earnest desire of the manufacturer to strengthen the competitive thrust of its product by inspiring retailers to invest in knowledge about the refined technology of the products, to lavish presale education on customers, and to follow up with first-rate post-sale service. They never quite explain how these services apply to many products that have traditionally been the subject of resale price maintenance, such as box candy, pet foods, blue jeans, vitamins, shampoo, knit shirts, and men's underwear.

In 1982 the Federal Trade Commission's own economic analysis demonstrated that the commission's pre-Reagan action forcing Levi Strauss to allow discounting of Levi jeans had saved customers at least $75 million a year without noticeable economic harm to Levi Strauss. Our economists were so displeased they have thus far buried the report as unworthy of public attention.

IN THOSE rare instances in which the economists concede that a market failure may have occurred, a second learned principle comes instantly into play: *Look Ma, No Hands*. This principle derives from the economists' faith that markets are, invariably, self-correcting.

There is, for example, really no need to trouble ourselves about monopolies. It may take weeks, months, years, decades—but in the long run, monopolies inevitably erode. On the consumer side even so apparent a failure as false and deceptive advertising need not trouble us too deeply. If a cigarette advertiser were boldly to represent that his brand "does not cause cancer," such representation might well have the benign effect of alerting consumers. Observed Robert Tolleson, the director of the Bureau of Economics until last year, "the natural consumer reaction [would be]: you mean cigarettes can cause cancer?" He ventured that ". . . the more references buyers see to an issue the greater the realization buyers will have that they have a stake in the debate and its outcome." Should the commission stumble upon a company marketing a hazardous defective product, we can take comfort in the possibility that the potential of personal injury or wrongful death actions will motivate the company to cure the defect, if not sooner, then later.

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Another quality of the F.T.C.'s new economists is their steadfast determination not to allow reality to interfere with the dictates of their economic model. I call this principle: *I Say It's Spinach, and I say the Hell with It*, or there's no such thing as inequality of bargaining power.

Recently the Commission reviewed an eight-year-long rule-making proceeding on credit collection abuses. It turns out that the most common causes of loan default are unanticipated events beyond the control of the debtor, such as job loss and illness. Lack of intention to repay a loan is rarely the cause. Many of the cruelest forms of extracting payment from truant debtors examined by the commission had already been outlawed in some states, including the automatic payment of the debtor's wages to a creditor without a judicial hearing, the waiver of the right to one's own attorney, and the right to seize the family's basic necessities—worthless to the creditor for resale, but valuable enough to debtors that the threat of seizing them imposes great pain on desperate families. Twelve state attorneys general urged the commission to ban them nationally.

What the record showed was that the practical choice for the low-income consumer needing credit was between the local loan office or the local loan shark. Local companies, with considerable local uniformity, demanded the full panoply of creditors' remedies. Our middle-class economists are used to borrowing money from banks and credit unions which do not find it necessary to demand these kinds of remedies. They concluded that consumers who sign credit agreements, having chosen, as presumably rational consumers, to seek their loans from Household Finance rather than the Chase Manhattan Bank, must have made a deliberate choice to subject themselves to such remedies. That there was no evidence whatsoever of this collective, masochistic free choice in the the 200,000-page record of the proceedings did not deter the economists from decrying *any* limitations upon the collection arsenal of the loan companies.

ONE FINAL principle, this one coined by chief economist Tolleson: *I didn't get a key to the room where they hand out values.*

The operating mandates of the Federal Trade Commission, the laws of Congress, say nothing about economic efficiency. The F.T.C. Act bars, simply, "unfair methods of competition and unfair or deceptive acts or practices." The benighted folk who managed the F.T.C. for sixty years until the coming of the Reagan era concerned themselves with values which, however misguidedly, preoccupy many a civilized government: a concern for those who are ill-equipped to protect themselves—the young, the elderly, the infirm—and an aversion to the exploitation of human misery for unfair gain in commercial transactions.

But Chairman Miller, in particular, has been troubled by the F.T.C.'s too scrupulous past pursuit of truth. When, in a rare display of ethical ecumenism, the advertising industry and the consumer movement both embraced the concept that no advertiser ought to make a claim for which he has no substantiation, Miller demurred. What if consumers really don't believe that advertisers are telling the truth, Miller asked the San Francisco Advertising Club last fall. If survey data show that consumers are skeptical about advertisers' claims, he argued, then the commission's efforts to require advertisers to back up their claims has been a "debacle." Indeed, Miller said the burden imposed by the commission in requiring tests to substantiate claims poses grave risks to market efficiency.

It appears that somebody clandestinely slipped the economists the key to the values room and out popped the particular value of efficiency. Thus one of our economists argued that it was suitable for the commission to prosecute a company discriminating against minorities or women if it was doing so solely for the pleasure of discriminating. But if the discriminatory standards were applied in an economically efficient way—so that credit might be denied to blacks, women, or the elderly so as to achieve lower-cost credit for white middle-class consumers—he was more hesitant about challenging the practice. But Congress, in the 1974 Equal Credit Opportunity Act, did ban such discrimination, even if discrimination might contribute to abstract efficiency.

Monopolies might be bad if the monopolist utilizes his monopoly power to restrict output because that is inefficient. But if the only result of an anticompetitive merger is to enable the monopolist to charge higher prices, then we face only a "transfer" from consumers to monopolists. F.T.C. antitrust lawyers sought permission from the commission to challenge an unlawful acquisition by a chemical company of a vigorous competitor, an acquisition which was likely to raise prices to consumers by 10 percent. No F.T.C. action was warranted, argued the Bureau of Economics: this price rise merely represented a transfer from consumers to the company, not the dreaded economic inefficiency.

I read Chairman Miller's speeches and often find myself nodding in agreement. The more general the principle, the more likely the agreement. When he cautions that F.T.C. actions must make good economic sense, when he invokes the goal of maximizing consumer welfare, when he vows to achieve more "bang" for our "enforcement buck," I'm ready to cheer—almost. It's when those grand principles get implemented by the application of the smaller principles I've uncovered that consumers better check their pockets. Perhaps we need a new generation of economists in government—one for whom the science of economics provides more than a thin, if elegant, veneer beneath which lurk that atavistic impulse to burn regulation (and regulators) at the stake.

MICHAEL PERTSCHUK

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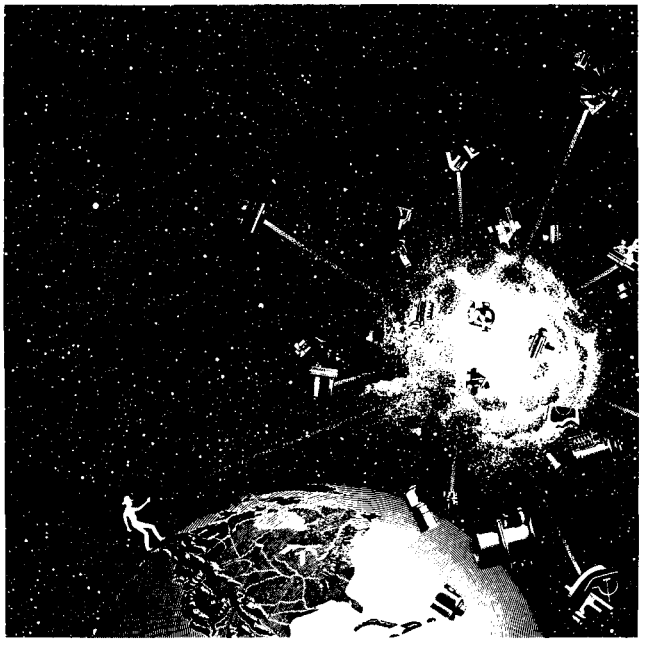
The worst offense is a bad defense.

THE ILLUSION OF STAR WARS

BY CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

THE NUCLEAR DEBATE, faced with exhaustion by reiteration, has been rescued by Ronald Reagan. About once every twenty-five years, a new generation discovers the horrors of the bomb and the paradoxes of deterrence, and begins looking for a way out. But there are only so many times that one can present the apocalypse, so many ways to parse deterrence theory, so many beguiling alternatives to pursue and discard. Inevitably, the debate grinds to a halt pretty much where it began: affirming, while deploring, the necessity of relying on the balance of terror to preserve the peace. Even the Democrats, who will make what Walter Mondale calls "those godawful nuclear weapons" an election issue, are calling only for a freeze and the cancellation of a couple of weapons systems (the MX and the B-1), which would yield nothing more radical than somewhat reduced levels of weaponry—at least of American weaponry.



BY JOHN PACK FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

In his famous Star Wars speech of March 23, 1983, Reagan saved the nuclear debate from imminent demise by launching it into outer space. In the process, he endowed it with a new setting, a new vocabulary, a new threat (the prospect of a defensive arms race in space), and, best of all, an entirely new twist—"a vision of the future which offers hope." Instead of relying on "the specter of retaliation" to keep us safe, he wondered, why not find "the means of rendering these nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete"? "What if free people could live secure in the knowledge that their security did not rest on the threat of instant U.S. retaliation to deter a Soviet attack—that we could intercept and destroy strategic ballistic missiles before they reached our own soil or that of our allies?" In other words: Why not abolish deterrence? In classic Reagan style, he offered a simple, clear, hopeful vision: a shining city on a hill—with a moat.

One need not doubt the President's sincerity to appreciate the political genius of this proposal. How better to foil the peace movement than to appropriate its revulsion for deterrence-by-counterthreat? Realists are condemned to argue, at length and in detail, that deterrence, like old age, is intolerable, until one considers the alternative. In support of Star Wars the President chose to embrace the cheerier premise of the peace movement. He contrasted the hopeful vision of a permanently secure America with deterrence-by-counterthreat, a policy of avenging lives rather than saving them, as he put it, and "a sad commentary on the human condition."

Others who have taken up the call for strategic defense are more blunt. One Star Wars report commissioned by the Pentagon characterizes "threats of massive destruction" as "increasingly hollow and morally unacceptable." George Keyworth, the President's science adviser and chief propagandist for strategic defense, told the Brookings Institution that the President's idea offers "a way of getting off the runaway horse of massive retaliation." It is "responding to the same kinds of sentiments and concerns that drive the nuclear freeze movement—that is, a realization of the increasing instability of nuclear deterrents." The promise is to replace an unstable and morally dubious strategic doctrine with a quintessentially American alternative: a cure that depends not on a spiritual miracle but on a technological one.

The game of ideological musical chairs occasioned by the Star Wars proposal has produced much bad faith on all sides. Peace activists constitutionally opposed to any weapons program proposed by anyone now attack Star Wars defenses in the name of deterrence, an idea they had found intolerable before March 23, 1983. The Reagan Administration—which had been justifying every weapons

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acquisition in the name of restoring deterrence (Secretary of Defense Weinberger learned the technique so well that he uses the word "deterrent" interchangeably with the word "weapon")—now calls deterrence, in the words of Undersecretary of Defense Fred Iklé, "this nightmare view of the nuclear age" which "accepts a world of nations frozen into an evil symmetry: two 'superpowers' forever confronting each other with hair-triggered missile arsenals, leashed precariously by the fear of 'each side' that its society is threatened by devastating nuclear retaliation." The Bishops could not have put it better.

When these words are one day quoted back to them, conservatives may come to regret having sawed off the doctrinal limb on which rests whatever defense consensus remains in this country. Deterrence has a difficult enough time sustaining attacks from the left. The last thing it needs as it recovers from the current bout of nuclear angst is an assault from right-wingers with Star Wars in their eyes.

Of course, if strategic defense can fulfill the hopes it arouses, if it can indeed make nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete," then any collateral damage done to deterrence is irrelevant. Having outlived its usefulness, deterrence would be utterly dispensable. Obviously it would be nice to repeal deterrence. The question is: Is it possible? The value of strategic defense, even in theory, turns on the answer to a practical question: Will it work?

ONE CANNOT answer that question with certainty any more than one could say with certainty whether a cure for cancer could be found by, say, next Easter if the entire G.N.P. were devoted to the effort. But one can marshal evidence to show that the prospect is overwhelmingly improbable, and that the investment required constitutes an exceedingly bad risk. One *proponent* calls the Star Wars effort the equivalent of seven simultaneous Manhattan projects—all of which would have to succeed for the system to work.

What would a strategic defense look like? First, it would have to be multilayered, attacking incoming missiles and warheads at least once in each phase of their trajectories—that is, while the missiles are taking off (boost phase), while they are in orbital midflight (midphase), and as they reenter the atmosphere and descend toward their targets (terminal phase).

Second, the Star Wars defense would have to be highly effective at each stage. A three-layered system that was 80 percent effective at each point would theoretically knock out 99.2 percent of all incoming warheads. But against a Soviet attack of 10,000 warheads, that would mean about 80 would get through. When one considers what two primitive bombs did to Japan, one can hardly call that a successful defense.

Third, the defense would have to be particularly effective in the boost phase, because every attacking missile that slips through the initial defensive barrage will turn into a hydra-headed monster: when it enters orbit in midphase, it can deploy assorted warheads, decoys, and chaff. Inadequate boost phase defense almost guarantees the failure of midphase defense, because the number of objects to be found, counted, tracked, attacked, and destroyed becomes immeasurably large. Yet effective boost phase defense is more than just difficult. Given all known technologies, it's practically undoable.

TO BE SURE, many schemes have been advanced. Probably the most popular is "High Frontier," advanced by General Daniel Graham, who wants to use "on the shelf" technology for a defense now. He envisions a fleet of space trucks orbiting the earth, each carrying dozens of attack vehicles, which would be fired to collide with Soviet missiles and destroy them. Since these would have to be put in low orbit, and since a satellite in low orbit is over Soviet missile fields only a fraction of the day, the scheme would require thousands of orbiting space trucks.

Apart from the stupendous cost just of lifting the stuff into space, the problem of extreme vulnerability leads John Gardner, the Pentagon's director of defensive systems, and Dr. Edward Teller, proponent of a more exotic defense system, to dismiss the scheme. "Predeployment in space will not work," says Teller—and for obvious reasons. Fixed orbiting systems, whether Graham's space trucks or more sophisticated orbiting laser battle stations, would be sitting ducks. Satellites are easy to find and track, and the technology for rendezvous in space is thoroughly tested. And they are vulnerable to antisatellite weaponry, from simple space mines (shadowing their target in orbit and ready to detonate at any moment) to ground-based lasers (now in development in the Soviet Union and the United States).

So Teller proposes what is being called a "pop-up" system. The idea is that as soon as the Soviets fire their missiles, submarines stationed near the Soviet Union launch a defensive system of X-ray laser battle stations, their self-destroying, single-shot ray guns powered by nuclear explosions. The directed pulse destroys the offending missile. The scheme is so harebrained that if Teller hadn't proposed it, it might never have gotten a hearing. It requires a new fleet of submarines. It produces X-rays with a questionable ability to penetrate the atmosphere. To neutralize it, all the Soviets have to do is design a booster that burns out completely within the atmosphere (something a Defense Department commission reporting to Secretary Weinberger has already concluded is quite possible). Even if that is not done, wrapping the booster in metallic foil one millimeter thick might do the trick of protecting it from the beam. In any case it is highly unlikely that any pop-up system could get into position in time to attack its target, since warning, evaluation, the decision to launch the battle stations, the launch into orbit, and, finally, starting up and firing the X-ray lasers would all have to be accomplished in less than two-and-a-half minutes.

So George Keyworth floats a third system: ground-based lasers directing their beams at hundreds of large, optically perfect, orbiting mirrors. Apart from the astro-

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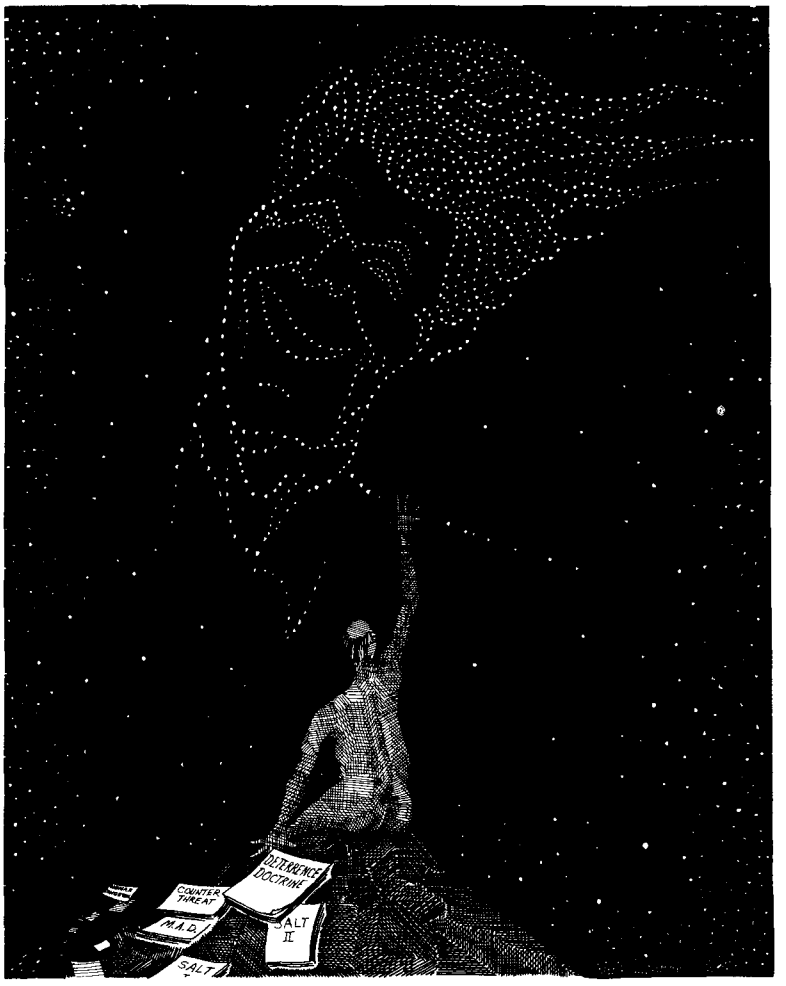
nomical cost of merely launching such a system and the fantastic amount of power required to run it (estimated at 20 to 60 percent of total U.S. electrical production), there is again the problem of vulnerability. In this case it is extreme, since it takes so little—no more than tiny pellets or even sand—to render such delicate mirrors worthless.

Whatever boost phase defense is used, a total defense faces daunting problems at the mid- and terminal phases as well. Those missiles that survive boost phase defenses can deploy dozens of objects—warheads, decoys, chaff. All this stuff zooms through space in identical trajectories, since there is no atmospheric drag to hold back the lighter (dummy) payloads. The major problem in midcourse is the enormous complexity of tracking and attacking so many objects at once. In principle, this is no different from antisatellite technology that the United States and the Soviet Union are now testing. But we are now only beginning to test systems which can attack one satellite at a time. Attacking 10,000 or more simultaneously is quite another matter.



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Terminal phase defense is perhaps best understood, since it is at the heart of the old antiballistic missile (ABM) systems which have been in development for twenty-five years. (The Soviets even have one operational system, permitted by the ABM treaty of 1972, defending Moscow.) There are basically two kinds of terminal defense, "point" and "area." Of all defensive technologies, the one most likely to work is terminal phase defense of "point" targets, such as missile silos. Its relative workability is due to two factors. First, the incoming missile may be attacked at ground or low air level (giving the defender time to track and attack an object that is approaching at thousands of miles per hour). Second, "leakage" is permissible. Successfully defending a missile field requires only that the bulk of silos be saved, not all of them.

On the other hand, "area" terminal defense—the defense of "soft" targets, such as cities—is extremely difficult because the attacker can detonate the weapon at high altitude (thus giving the defender very little time to attack the missile) and still devastate a city, and because a "leakage" rate of even a single missile per site is catastrophic.

Apart from the weaknesses of individual systems—weaknesses that are synergistic, because leakage through one layer of defense multiplies the number of targets and thus the difficulties at the next—there are several general considerations that make a successful defense of the American homeland improbable in the extreme. First is the almost absurd complexity of a system requiring the instantaneous interaction of geostationary sensors, pop-up battle stations, ground-based computer programs, terminal guidance systems, human evaluators and commanders, and orbiting tracking and targeting systems. One is required to believe, as the Union of Concerned Scientists puts it, in "a defense of stupifying complexity, under the total control of a computer program whose proportions defy description, and whose performance will remain a deep mystery" because it could never be tested in full until the moment of actual use, at which time it would have to operate in the unimaginably pressured atmosphere of an ongoing nuclear war.

The second consideration is leverage: the relative ease with which minor offensive countermeasures can foil even the most complicated, expensive, and elaborate defenses. The Soviets will not just lounge around during the next decade or two while we are developing defensive systems. The countermeasures available to them are plentiful, and, compared to the defensive systems they would be designed to foil, cheap. Consider the simplest ones: putting protective coating on boosters to deflect directed energy beams; attaching skirts to the bottom of boosters to confuse sensors as to the real distance between the flame (which the sensor detects) and the body of the missile (which the battle station must attack); rotating a missile so that a directed energy beam, which needs several seconds before it can melt a hole at a point in the booster, is dispersed over a large area. And

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there are penetration aids: decoy warheads, dummy boosters, advanced guidance systems, electronic jamming gear, technological widgetry already so advanced that the Arms Control and Disarmamemt Agency reported in 1981 that "the potential effectiveness of U.S. ICBMs and SLBMs, based on maneuvering reentry vehicle and penetration aids technology, could assure the penetration of sufficient numbers of U.S. reentry vehicles regardless of Soviet actions with respect to ABM improvements." Translation: we're already ahead today of where they'll be tomorrow.

Furthermore, anyone about to launch a nuclear attack would take the obvious precaution of first knocking out key, vulnerable elements of a defensive system, such as geostationary sensors or orbiting battle stations. This would be easy to do. In addition, using 1970s technology, the Soviets could multiply their offensive forces to the point where they would saturate any American defense. They could just roll out more SS-18s, or, even more simply, multiply the number of warheads on their existing heavy missiles. Once the ABM treaty has been abrogated by the deployment of the American defensive system, the Soviets would be sure to break out of the ten-warhead-per-missile limit imposed by SALT. (The SS-18, for example, which now has eight warheads, is big enough to carry thirty.)

Leverage means that whatever defense can do, offense can do better, and cheaper. The clincher, though—and this is the third consideration—is that offense does not have to do it nearly so well to prevail. The demands for success of offense and defense are wholly disproportionate. An American defense that is 99 percent effective would still allow a hundred nuclear weapons to land on American soil. That is failure. A Soviet offense that is 5 percent successful could, if targeted at cities, kill half the U.S. population instantly. That is success. The principle at work here is the concentration of awesome offensive power in a tiny volume, a property of nuclear weaponry that has transformed the balance of offense and defense. Defense may yet one day come up with an answer. But today, and for as far as the eye can see, no one has any idea what that is.

THE BEST we can hope for is a ruinously expensive, leaky defense. Still, why not build it? Why not try to save some lives? Because, while producing a false sense of security, such a system would not make us safer. The essence of the ideology of deterrence is that it is worth making a choice that might increase the number of casualties in a war, if that choice substantially decreases the chance of war breaking out in the first place. (That is the calculation behind our "first-use" policy in Europe.) Such a calculation begins from an appreciation of the unimaginable destruction that any nuclear war would cause, and elevates to first principle the necessity of creating conditions that make the starting of such a war as unlikely as possible. In the context of the U.S.-Soviet nuclear confrontation, that means making a first strike as uninviting as possible and a retaliatory strike as certain as possible.

A leaky U.S. defense would have a reverse effect on the Soviets. No one would be quite sure how leaky the American defense was. It would undoubtedly not be good enough to prevent the Soviets, if they struck first, from destroying the United States as a functioning society. But a degraded Soviet missile force—one that had sustained a first strike and was being launched in retaliation—might not be sufficient to overcome a leaky defense, and thus would lose much of its credibility as a deterrent. In a crisis the Soviets would find themselves pressed to use it or lose it. Thus a leaky U.S. defense would create new uncertainties for Soviet planners. Generally, such nuclear uncertainty is stabilizing. But not always. One has to ask, uncertainty about what? Uncertainty that the Soviet retaliatory force could indeed retaliate would make the nuclear balance more precarious than it is today. (And a deployed leaky defense would create further instability by wrecking arms control. It would make an antisatellite weapons treaty impossible, since midphase defense *is* antisatellite warfare. It would also destroy the ABM treaty, which in many ways is a condition for controlling offensive weaponry as well. But that's another argument.)

LET'S ASSUME that all technical problems are solved and a leakproof system is possible. What could be wrong with a nuclear Astrodome over the United States? The United States would find itself in a position of overwhelming strategic superiority, defended, and still retaining its offensive capacity against the Soviet Union. I would trust an American President not to launch a war from this unassailable position, though the Kremlin undoubtedly wouldn't. Nonetheless there is nothing the Kremlin could do about it. That is, if the dome could be put up overnight.

The problem is that it can't. And in the years—decades—it would take to put it up, the Soviets would be in a very good position to do something about it. Secretary Weinberger says he would view a Soviet Star Wars system as "one of the most frightening prospects" imaginable. It is unlikely that the Kremlin would remain any more serene in the face of a comparable American development. What would the Soviets do? They would certainly develop countermeasures, increase their offensive capacity, and so on. But if they found themselves facing nuclear subjugation, they might attack elements of the system when it approached completion; even more likely, during a crisis; and, almost certainly, if war appeared imminent. And since it is hard to imagine an attack on American defensive installations being viewed as anything other than an act of war, a Star Wars defense, *before becoming operational*, could easily provoke an armed conflict between the superpowers.

These transitional dangers are so obvious that even Administration officials have talked about sharing the technology with the Soviets. Since perfect protection cannot be achieved overnight, the one answer is to try to achieve it simultaneously. That would be the best of all possible worlds: two Astrodomes, and no threat to either side. But

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how to get from here to there? The Fletcher Commission, one of two panels that studied Star Wars for the Pentagon, recognized the need for "a cooperative transition to defensive forces." It acknowledged, however, that because of "uncertainties" it could provide "no detailed blueprint for arms control in the transition period," though it suggested that "a list of arms control measures might include agreed schedules for introducing the defensive systems of both sides, and associated schedules for reductions in ballistic missiles and other nuclear forces . . . confidence-building measures and controls on devices designed specifically to attack or degrade the other side's defensive systems." But the degree of trust and mutuality required for such agreements is an extremely unlikely prospect. Furthermore, as the physicists Victor Weisskopf and Hans Bethe point out, suppose the United States and the Soviet Union did somehow reach the point where they were agreeing on mutually verified and managed disarmament (which is what the double Astrodome amounts to). Given such a level of cooperation, surely they could achieve the same objective more easily and less expensively in other ways—e.g., huge reductions in current offensive arsenals, a transition to single-warhead missiles, and the like—and thus spare themselves a needless defensive arms race.

Ignore the problem of transition. Stretch the imagination again and conjure up a leakproof defense against ballistic missiles. What's wrong with this picture? Two things. First, such a system would never provide the stable defense promised by the Star Wars advocates to replace, indeed to transcend, deterrence. Even if defense gained an advantage, it would be bound to be temporary. The race with offensive technology would be constant. The result would be a fluctuating unstable balance, offering the prospect of only more uncertainty than we know today. The other thing wrong with this picture is that it does nothing to stop nonballistic nuclear attack. Advanced aircraft, cruise missiles, and even depressed-trajectory submarine-launched ballistic missiles could make their way through. Not only will the Astrodome's roof be peeled away occasionally by offensive advances, but planes, cruise missiles, and nonorbiting ballistic missiles can get in through the doors.

ONE SUSPECTS therefore that for some the hope of abolishing deterrence is not the real reason for pushing Star Wars scenarios, but instead a convenient carrot for getting popular support behind a program whose real objective would never command any support. And that objective is to force an arms race with the Soviets in areas of technology where we seem to be ahead. A strategic defense program would set off several arms races. The Soviets would be forced to develop offensive penetration aids; they would be pushed to try to match our defensive system as well; and, if the technology of defense appeared to be succeeding, they would eventually be forced away from ballistic missiles to "air-breathing" delivery systems like cruise missiles and bombers. The only good thing to be said about such a development is that air-breathing delivery systems are slower and thus less useful for first strike purposes. But cruise missiles, for example, are almost impossible to count for arms control purposes, and, furthermore, would do nothing to change our current nuclear posture of "avenging lives instead of saving them." Our populations will be as vulnerable as they ever were.

"I see the shift," says Keyworth, referring to the shift from offensive to defensive technologies, "as a decided advantage to the West in maintaining a stable peace." Does he really believe that the Soviets are more than a year or two behind and will not catch up with us in penetration aids or cruise missile technology? It is hard to discern exactly what kind of advantage he hopes to reap from this arms race other than the prospect of bleeding the Soviets dry. Yet even that is an unlikely outcome. It is very short-sighted to weigh the prospects of a U.S.-Soviet arms race purely in terms of technological considerations; there are political ones as well. The Soviet people will have no say in whether their government engages in a ruinous and worthless arms race in these exotic technologies. The American people will. Those eager to start a race with the Soviets may find themselves soon outstripped, just as the United States was in multiple-warhead deployment in the 1970s.

IF STAR WARS is advanced as a way to abolish deterrence, it is a fraud. And if it is advanced as a way to engage in an arms race, it is a waste. One needn't be sentimental about the sanctity of outer space to oppose pouring vast national resources into a black hole. "The militarization of space" is neither a good nor a bad thing. As of now, space is an open freeway for the delivery of the most awesome weapons in human history. If it were possible to station a fleet of cops to stop the deliveries, then the militarization of space would be much to be desired. Unfortunately, desire is not enough.

High Frontier, Daniel Graham has said, is automatic arms control. Of course, it is not really arms control at all. It is a new attack system which is designed to go on automatic when its computers tell it to. ("You always have to worry about a mechanized device somehow malfunctioning," he admits.) Automaticity in the nuclear world is very dangerous. The only real alternative is the very deliberate, unsatisfying path of arms control—supplemented, perhaps, by mutually agreed technological advances in ABM point defenses, the only feasible defensive technology and the only one that strengthens, rather than weakens, deterrence (since it designed to protect retaliatory missile forces).

Such is our fate until someone comes up with the technological miracle that really works, that can be deployed overnight or bilaterally, and that can sniff out the cruise missile you can store in a walk-in closet. Until then, we will have to bear the burden of living with what the Undersecretary of Defense calls "the permanent nightmare" of deterrence. And so will he. □

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Why NASA's space shots don't reach for the stars.

MISSION OUT OF CONTROL

BY TINA ROSENBERG

WHILE Neil Armstrong was taking his giant step for mankind on the Moon in 1969, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration was soaring back on Earth. By meeting President Kennedy's 1961 challenge to land a man on the Moon within the decade, NASA had proven communism was no match for American know-how and the American way of life. A decade of race riots, assassinations and war culminated with the stars and stripes planted in the Sea of Tranquility.

But following the Moon landing, NASA went through a postpartum depression on a grand scale. Employment in the space program, once 420,000, declined to 160,000 by 1971. Laboratories closed. NASA's budget, once nearly $6 billion, dropped to slightly more than half that amount. After enjoying high status, the excitement of working on a top-priority challenge, and all the money it needed, NASA was faced with the question: Now what?

The agency responded by asking for the moon. In 1970 and 1971 NASA requested money for a reusable space shuttle to carry cargo to space cheaply, and for a 100-man orbiting space station by 1980, and for a $24 billion manned mission to Mars, and for a commitment to a lunar base. To fill in what it thought would be a gap in manned space flight between the last Apollo mission and the start of the shuttle, NASA even proposed a mini-shuttle, which it admitted had limited use.

In short, NASA had gotten hooked on the size and glamour of manned programs. It's easy to see why. NASA was—and still is—convinced that only manned missions can focus public interest in space and persuade Congress to fund NASA's programs. "Supporting astronomy is like supporting ballet," says Alexander Dessler, director of the Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama. "There's no clear, immediate benefit." But by showing Americans performing dangerous missions in space, NASA captured public attention with a human drama. NASA has always understood the P.R. value of human derring-do. When choosing astronauts for its first manned program, Mercury, NASA tried to find candidates who fit the public's conception of clean-living All-Americans who could represent the United States in its race with the Russians. Once the astronauts were chosen, *Life* magazine airbrushed their lives, and NASA changed their role from passenger to the more heroic job of pilot. Astronauts can also make speeches and testify before Congress—a skill no satellite will ever master.

But public attention is not the only advantage NASA gets from manned programs. "It's difficult to know where the public interest in seeing man in space stops, and NASA's inclination to keep people employed starts," says a Senate staffer. No. 1 on NASA's current list of eight goals is "maintain the institution."

If NASA wants to keep its scientists and engineers busy, the best way is through manned programs. Manned spacecraft are larger, more expensive, and more time-consuming to build than unmanned vehicles because they require food, water, oxygen, and back-up systems that are not needed for unmanned vehicles. Manned vehicles need to bring astronauts safely back to Earth, which necessitates more tests, longer trips, and re-entry hardware such as heat shields. Most important, a manned program, unlike a scientific program, usually implies a commitment to multiple launches and ambitious space goals.

NASA not only worries about employing its own personnel, it also looks out for the aerospace industry. As with the Pentagon, the line between government and industry blurs when the two work together on twenty-year projects. "We work so closely together that we jokingly call ourselves 'partners-in-crime,' " says Peter Eaton of NASA's Expendable Launch Vehicle office, speaking of NASA and the McDonnell Douglas Corporation, which makes the Delta rocket. It is commonplace for NASA to recruit industry engineers and for NASA officials to leave the agency to work for a contractor.

Although NASA had asked in the early 1970s for funds for just about every manned project imaginable, Congress and President Nixon did not comply. With his budget stretched by the Vietnam War, Nixon approved only the project NASA touted as a money-saver: the space shuttle. The shuttle, it was claimed, was a kind of cheap, efficient truck that would haul materials and satellites into orbit. It would be less expensive than expendable rockets because while it would need a new fuel tank and refurbished booster rockets for each mission, the airplane-shaped orbiter would be reusable. At a development cost set for $5 billion and a much lower operating cost than disposable rockets, the shuttle would lower the cost of

Tina Rosenberg is a Washington writer. Her most recent article for TNR was on the federal budget ("Figure Skirting," February 13).

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commuting to space and therefore of all future space missions.

From the beginning the shuttle proved balky. Scheduled to launch in 1977, it didn't make its first test until April 1981 and wasn't operational until November 1982. By the time the shuttle was open for business, development costs had ballooned from $5 billion to $15.5 billion. NASA is still ironing out minor problems, but the shuttle's real flaw won't go away: it's no cheaper to operate than NASA's old Chevy, the Delta rocket.

At first glance, the shuttle does look cheaper than launching the same payload with the Delta. Let's say your commercial firm wants to launch four communications satellites in 1986 into geostationary orbit (G.S.O.) 22,000 miles above the equator. At G.S.O. a satellite rotates with the Earth—a satellite placed over Quito, Ecuador, stays over Quito, Ecuador. With the Delta, each launch will cost $25 million. Total price for launching four satellites: $100 million.

The shuttle can carry four times the Delta payload, but it requires a two-stage trip because it orbits a mere 350 miles up, practically skimming the Earth's surface. To kick your satellite up to G.S.O., you need a Payload Assist Module, or PAM. (The PAM is the part that malfunctioned two flights ago and flung two satellites into the wrong orbit in the process.) Each PAM will cost $4 to $5 million, for a cost of about $18 million for four. From 1986 through 1988, you can book the whole shuttle—enough for your four satellites—for $79.4 million. So for your 1986 shuttle mission to G.S.O., you will pay a total of $97.4 million. You save all of $2.6 million over the cost of Delta rockets.

But what's important to recognize about the shuttle is that price to customers has no relation to the actual cost of the shuttle. "For realistic missions during the next twenty years or so, the shuttle system is actually more expensive than are conventional, expendable boosters," Dr. James A. Van Allen, professor of astronomy at the University of Iowa wrote in 1982. The shuttle looks cheaper because NASA subsidizes its missions.

It wasn't meant to be that way. Shuttle prices were set in 1972, when NASA predicted there would be 572 flights. The problem is that the shuttle won't fly 572 missions; NASA now estimates only 234 missions before the machine is ready for the Smithsonian. That gives NASA fewer flights over which to amortize the cost of building the shuttles and a shorter time in which to learn to operate more efficiently. As a result, costs have soared—this year, each shuttle launch costs $200 million. NASA had planned to raise the price of post-1988 missions to recoup the money it is losing now but NASA has changed its mind. NASA senior staff engineer Barbara Stone says that by 1988, the shuttle will still cost over $100 million per flight—too much for NASA to charge and stay competitive. "I don't think we'll recover those cost underruns," Stone says.

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NASA claims the shuttle can save money another way, by repairing and redeploying ailing satellites. In April, shuttle astronauts repaired the Solar Maximum observatory. But the shuttle can only reach satellites in or near low Earth orbit, which is where Solar Max was stationed. The vast majority of satellites are in G.S.O., a good 21,650 miles beyond the shuttle's reach. And what NASA does not mention is that there was no reason to build the shuttle to host satellite repair missions. Expendable rockets can do the same job, and they can travel to G.S.O. According to Arthur Koski, spokesman for the Martin-Marietta Corporation, which worked with NASA to repair Solar Max, the only reason rockets can't do repair missions is that we don't have any. "Our only manned spacecraft is the shuttle," says Koski. "And at this point it wouldn't make much sense to build rockets."

NASA's last commercial Delta launch is scheduled for the end of this year. By getting rid of the Delta program NASA will no longer steal business from itself. But the

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shuttle still faces competition from emerging for-profit rocket companies. NASA is putting the finishing touches on an agreement with a private company, Transpace Carriers Inc., to take over existing contracts for the Delta. The company plans to make its first launch in 1985 or 1986. NASA already has competition from the European Space Agency's Ariane rocket. Arianespace has one model, the Ariane 3, that can throw half the shuttle payload (or two Delta payloads) into G.S.O. for $25 million, including the boosters. Total cost of a shuttle-sized payload: $50 million. And because Ariane is out to make money, that is not a subsidized price. Western Union, GTE, and INTELSAT among others have launched satellites on Ariane.

Why can Ariane deliver at half the shuttle's price? "We're not a man-rated vehicle," explains Jean Michel Eid, assistant manager of Arianespace in America. It's people and the life support and safety systems they require that keep the shuttle from lowering the cost of space travel.

Now that the shuttle is working, NASA is at another critical point: the decision of what to do next. Keeping in mind the advantages NASA reaps from manned programs, agency administrator James M. Beggs chose the space station. When he first asked for funds he ran into a wall. The Space Science Board of the National Academy of Sciences said a space station had no scientific purpose. The Pentagon said it had no military purpose. David Stockman, director of the Office of Management and Budget, thought it was too expensive, and the science adviser to the President, George Keyworth, thought it was too boring to generate the kind of excitement the Apollo mission had created. Fortunately for NASA, Beggs found a believer in President Reagan, who endorsed a permanently manned space station in his State of the Union Address and put seed money for it in his 1985 budget.

BEGGS CONVINCED Reagan of what has become NASA's guiding vision: a modern version of manifest destiny that sees Americans living and working in space. This philosophy is almost devoid of any idea about what we will do there. Being there, apparently, is enough. At a November 1983 Congressional hearing, T. F. Rogers of the Office of Technology Assessment testified, "To our knowledge, there is no comprehensive and thoughtful list of goals." On NASA's twenty-fifth anniversary in the fall of 1983, Beggs wrote, "I believe that a space station, is, indeed, an idea whose time has come. Sooner or later, this country is going to take the next logical step in space and will build one. And the sooner we do so, the better it will be for us, because a space station is essential if we are to maintain our preeminence. I see a space station as an essential stepping-stone to the future."

NASA has what seems to be an enlightened attitude toward space: a place where poets and painters as well as scientists can work. "I'm not prejudiced,"says Hans Mark, deputy administrator of NASA. "I see a future where people doing things not associated with space will go there. It is the obligation of any great civilization to support the arts."

If you happen to be the poet or pioneer chosen to live in space, this idea is exciting and romantic. If you're the taxpayer signing the lease for this high-rent suburb, however, its appeal pales somewhat. Cost is something space visionaries never seem to think about. Never mind that settling the Sahara would cost far less than housing a large number of people in orbit. Never mind that you could keep thousands of artists from starving on Earth for the price of putting one a little bit closer to the stars. The idea of a space colony allows NASA to view manned missions as their own justification, at the expense of commerce, science, and exploration.

SPACE travel has never quite lived up to its billing as a technological bonanza. The science and engineering feats it encourages have only limited use here on Earth. Trickle-down technology is not an efficent way to regain our competitive economic edge. And the spin-offs space has given us such as hand-held calculators, digital watches, phone calls via satellite, improved computers—just about everything except Tang—have come from programs that have one thing in common: they were unmanned. "There's an inverse relationship between the payoff of a mission and the importance of man," says Wallace A. Berger, staff director of the Senate subcommittee that oversees NASA. "An overemphasis on manned missions forecloses advancing science or producing something of commercial value."

This is because building new ways to carry men in space offers little of value to earthlings. The shuttle's efficient engines that burn super-cold hydrogen and oxygen, for example, have no other use except in the dubious cause of the MX missile. In contrast, unmanned planetary probes have spawned new ways to send information and pictures over very long distances, the basis for new communications technologies. Moreover, designing missions for men creates less technological innovation than creating an automated mission to do the same tasks. If an astronaut is around to change the film in an observatory camera, there is no reason to develop the robotics to do it automatically.

Recently, speculation about the commercial benefits of space has centered on taking advantage of space's zero gravity and near-perfect vacuum to process new metal alloys and pure chemicals. NASA sees the space station as a space factory. But just as with the shuttle, the manned space station faces competition from cheaper, easier to build, unmanned space manufacturing platforms. The key to economically viable space manufacturing is doing the job more cheaply than on Earth. That means robotics. While manned work might be prohibitively expensive, an automated mission at one-twentieth the cost could make space processing profitable. The Fairchild Corporation is developing an unmanned space platform

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called Leasecraft which it hopes to launch in 1987—about seven years before NASA's space station is supposed to be ready.

One of the first tests of Leasecraft's commercial potential will be electrophoresis, a gravity-free way to make pure pharmaceuticals, developed jointly by Johnson & Johnson and McDonnell Douglas. Electrophoresis is the best-developed space manufacturing process, and manned space station supporters invariably mention it as a project that they could put in orbit. But far from needing a manned space station, electrophoresis is fully automated, needing only periodic human tending—and there is a good chance its manufacturers will sign with Leasecraft. (It's no surprise that NASA is now exploring the idea of launching an unmanned space platform.)

INSTEAD OF encouraging cost-effective automatic work, the space station will subsidize an inefficient method of processing. "It's like buying an expensive car, pretending it didn't cost you anything, and comparing it to the cost of taking a taxi," says Richard Garwin, former science adviser to President Carter. "When you offer free passage, people will take you up on it." And just as with the shuttle, if NASA stops subsidizing industry and charges prices that reflect the space station's true costs, it will lose the price war with unmanned platforms.

More harmful than the manned program's effect on commercial industries is its impact on space science. The space station just won't support an adequate scientific laboratory. The first problem is that the space station must stay in low Earth orbit, too low for many experiments. For example, the space station can't do experiments on the solar wind (vast currents of ions that affect the weather and telecommunications) because it can't reach the solar wind. But more crippling, it is manned. "All experiments and observations can be done equally well or better by instruments than by men," says Dr. Thomas Gold, a Cornell University physicist. "For observations, the presence of a man is a disaster. He can't keep still enough." The advantage of having a telescope where no atmosphere distorts light is lost if there are humans tromping around literally rocking the boat.

There are, of course, experiments you need men for: experiments on men. But that's about all. Communications and robotics have become sophisticated enough so that experiments can be tended by remote control from Earth about as well as by men in a capsule. Ask scientists what kind of missions they would choose to do their experiments, and they will say small, unmanned (and cheaper) go-anywhere capsules built to the specifications of particular experiments.

The debilitating impact of the shuttle and the space station is even greater where exploration is concerned. Because of the moon shot, the public has come to confuse "exploration" with "manned exploration," a mistake NASA does little to correct. In fact, *unmanned* exploration is the best way to expand our space horizons. Take one of NASA's most ambitious goals, a manned expedition to Mars. Thanks to the Viking Mars lander we have charted Mars' weather, atmosphere, soil, and volcanoes. For almost any space mission, unmanned probes with cameras and scientific equipment can find as much about a new surface or atmosphere as a man can learn. It's not the next best thing to being there—it is being there. "Instead of seeing the surface directly, you'd see it through a TV camera," says NASA's Dessler. There are only two differences between manned and mechanical exploration. One is that manned missions cost twenty to thirty times more than unmanned missions; Sally Ride on Mars would be nothing more than a $100 billion flag-planter. The other is that to most places we want to go, such as Venus or Jupiter, we can send instruments—and we can't send men.

The most lofty justification for manned space travel is that it satisfies, as all "Star Trek" fans know, the urge "to boldly go where no man has gone before." But a mission to Mars would be timidly revisiting a place we went years ago. As an expression of the human spirit, manned space exploration is rather complacent. Preferring a lunar base to real exploration is like Columbus saying to Queen Isabella, "I'll pass on the ships but why don't you give me some money to take a Mediterranean cruise?"

Even if we do want to prepare for future manned missions, the space station is the wrong first step. We already know how to acclimate humans to space life, and we know how to build rockets in space. Our challenge is to find a sufficiently powerful propulsion method to travel throughout the solar system. A space station can only launch deep space travel after that problem is solved.

THE REAL *Niñas* and *Pintas* today are unmanned observatories and planetary probes. And the cost overruns of the shuttle drained money from their important missions; the space station is threatening to do the same. Because of the shuttle, the United States is not launching a probe to sail through the tail of Halley's comet in 1986 and gather samples, as the Soviets and Europeans are doing. NASA canceled the Mars Rover, which would have scooted around Mars' surface and brought back samples from many sites. It canceled the Grand Tour, a satellite mission that would have taken advantage of an alignment of all the outer planets that won't occur again at least until the year 2110. It canceled the Mariner mission to study the mysteries of Jupiter's atmosphere and to give us a first glimpse at the moons of Uranus. The United States has withdrawn our satellite from the International Solar Polar Mission leaving just one European probe to fly past regions of the sun which we have never seen before. NASA has also abandoned the Sun Blazer, a proposed craft that would have flown within 4 million miles of the sun's surface.

Ten years and $20 billion from now, when the space station is operating, what can we expect? Almost certainly, NASA will ask for that manned Mars mission or lunar base, invoking words like "American preeminence" and "fulfilling our destiny." But what NASA will not talk about is how little its projects will capture the wonder and romance of true space exploration.

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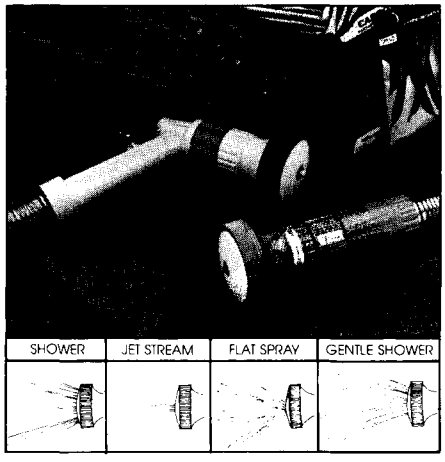

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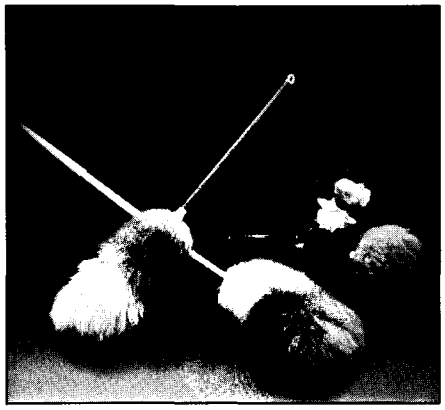

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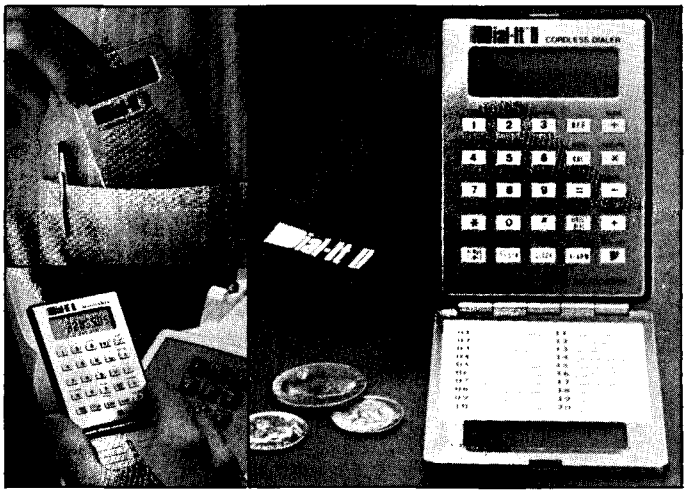

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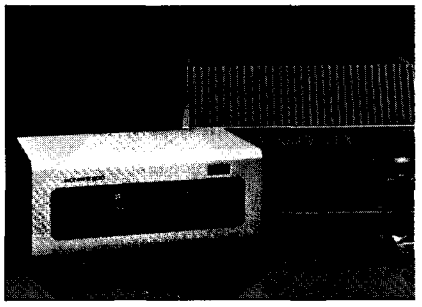

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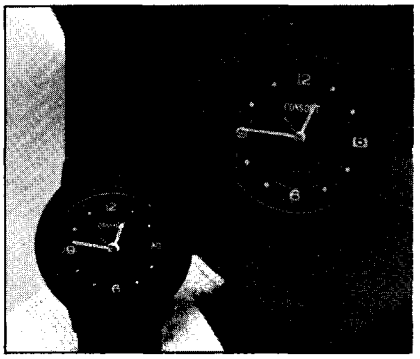

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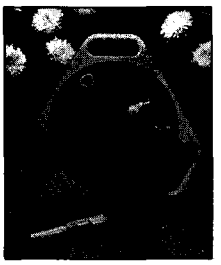

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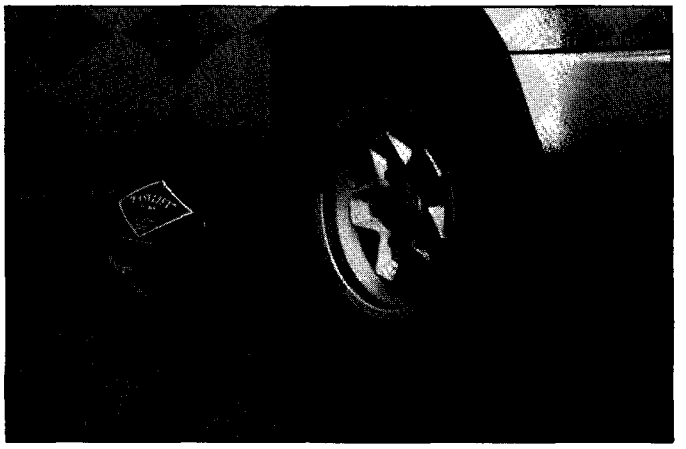

Why should *you* do the work when your car is perfectly capable of jacking *itself* up? Surprised? Don't be. It's all basic physics. Just position the Easylift Air Jack under the car, connect the hose to the end of the exhaust pipe, start the engine, and *voila*!, your car gradually rises on its own hot air. In minutes your car is off the ground ready for tire changing. The Easylift is made of PVC-coated nylon mesh with welded seams (the same construction used for giant transport bags that hold 75 tons of cement). Large 21″ diameter means car can not roll off jack. Needs only 1″ clearance to fit under vehicle. Great for getting out of ruts or jacking on ice, snow, uneven ground. Compact enough to store in spare tire well. New double locking valve allows gradual deflation. The Easylift provides 16″ of lift to a two-ton vehicle and makes it absolutely easy for anyone to quickly and safely jack up a car. Made in England, and it carries a one-year warranty and costs **$47.00** ($4.95) #A1142.

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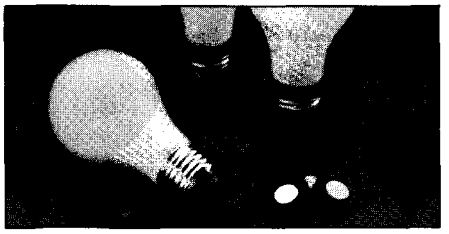

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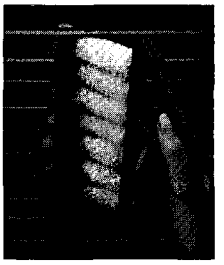

It has taken a long time figuring out how to clean venetian blinds efficiently. Now a California designer has finally solved the problem convincingly with this blind cleaner. This tool has 7 roller fingers, 4″ long and covered with a synthetic lambswool that picks up and holds dust and dirt. Pull the trigger and the fingers spread enough to slip over the blind slats (6 mini-blind slats or 3 conventional slats). Release the trigger and the slats are held firmly between the cleaning rollers. Then move the cleaner back and forth along the blind, release and grip the next set of slats. When soiled, the rollers can be removed and washed. **$9.00** ($1.95) #787. Two for **$17.00** ($1.95) #A7872.

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Not-So-Deep Freeze

Cold is fairly hot these days. Arctic settings have never been very popular, but the past year brought two frigid films, *Flight of the Eagle* and *Never Cry Wolf*, and now we have *Antarctica* and *Iceman*. All of them have at least two elements in common. They reflect hunger for relatively novel settings and recognition of chances for spectacular cinematography.

Antarctica is the worst of this low-temperature lot. It's a Japanese film based on the story of a 1958 expedition to the South Pole. Because of a sudden change in weather conditions, some sled dogs are abandoned by their masters at the polar camp. The dogs have considerable trouble in surviving; several don't make it. The masters return as soon as they can, which is many months later. I couldn't understand the joyful reunion. Why didn't the surviving dogs attack their betrayers who had left them chained up outdoors? The picture may have appeal for children, but even children may wonder how the filmmakers knew what the abandoned dogs did (this is allegedly a factual story) and how some of them died. The cinematographer, Akira Shiizuka, supplies splendid pictures, but the more sophisticated they are, the more they contrast with the sentimental silliness of the story.

Antarctica
(Twentieth Century-Fox)

Iceman
(Universal)

Iceman, an American production, is complex and portentous. The central idea of the script by Chip Proser and John Drimmer is promising. In northern Canada, amidst immense snowy expanses, an exploration crew from an American mining company discovers a form encased in ice. A huge cube is cut out of the ice formation, is flown back to the lab by helicopter, and is carefully opened. Within it is found the body of a man, clad in skins, who was quick-frozen some 40,000 years ago. Within that man is found life, cryogenically preserved. He is returned to consciousness and being.

The idea has possibilities, few of which are realized; still it's easy to see why it appealed to the director, Fred Schepisi (pronounced Skepsee). He is the Australian whose first American film, *Barbarosa*, was the closest to a spaghetti Western that's ever been made in Texas; but his previous film, *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith* (TNR, September 20, 1980), was a powerful and lovely work about an aborigine at the turn of the century, his betrayal and downfall at the hands of Australian whites. *Iceman* clearly provided Schepisi with another chance to contrast the primitive and the modern. The trouble here is that, unlike the Australian story where the drama was all too available, the drama in *Iceman* had to be invented; and most of that invention deals with conflicts among the scientists, not between the primitive and the civilized.

Grant to the realm of scientific fiction—as against science fiction—the gigantic, lavishly equipped laboratories buried under the snow. Waste no thought on how the construction machinery, let alone the scientific equipment, was transported to the middle of white nowhere. All this is easier to accept than that the station's research director is an attractive young woman. That idea looks more like Movieland fiction than does the huge underground lab. Lindsay Crouse is a good actress (she was Daniel's mother in *Daniel*), but she can do nothing with this role—not because it's a woman in charge of a big research team, but because it's not a woman. It's just the filmmakers' device to get an attractive female into a cast of men, to tickle us with the possibility of romance between her and the leading man. The only other women in the picture are an elderly scientist who is flown in later for special help, not clarified, and some older Inuit women who are used as mythic totems.

The leading man is an anthropologist played by Timothy Hutton (who was Daniel in *Daniel*), and it would be hard to think of a more scruffy, scraggly blob of a figure in American films today. Hutton's face and body seem to have no fixed outline; his general effect is that of a long, bearded amoeba. The battles between him and Crouse are weary reruns of disputes, full of technical lingo, that recur in films of professionals at odds which, if they are between people of differing sexes, usually end in bed. The only variation in *Iceman* is that the fights don't end horizontally; but that negative variation doesn't give the tired tussles any retrospective freshness.

The revived Iceman is kept in a vivarium, a sort of preserve as in a modern zoo, with a small waterfall, a stream, and some caves (all underground in the Arctic). The forward motion of the film, such as it is, evolves from Hutton's entry into the vivarium and his gradual, growing friendship with the Iceman, learning his small vocabulary, earning his trust. The worst scene is the one in which Hutton insists that Crouse accompany him into the vivarium. The excuse is that he wants to learn whether a different kind of creature will arouse a different response in the Iceman. Under the scientific baloney is plain sex tease,

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Biquefarre. Georges Rouquier's 1983 sequel to his 1947 *Farrebique*, a humane chronicle of French farm life. (Reviewed 4/23/84)

The Good Fight. Interviews with survivors of the Lincoln Brigade which fought in the Spanish Civil War. Politically incomplete but personally moving. (4/23/84)

Romancing the Stone. Amusing parody of a wild adventure novel in which a woman author of such novels gets swept away. (5/7/84)

Sugar Cane Alley. A first film by a young black Martinique woman, Euzhan Palcy, about a Martinique boy in 1930. Highly engaging. (4/30/84)

SK

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for the poor Iceman and for poor us, too. He and we are repelled.

The best element in the film, its only legitimacy, is the performance of the Iceman by John Lone. He is a dancer-actor-director-choreographer-composer, born in Hong Kong, whose work I admired in a play called *The Dance and the Railroad* and who is an artist of skill and imagination. His Iceman is no mere aggregation of grunts and gropes, comic and grave; it is a vision realized. Not many of us can check the accuracy of Lone's performance of a 40,000-year-old, but then not many of us can check the accuracy in a performance of Greek tragedy merely 2,500 years old. We are persuaded in both cases only by inner consistency; Lone provides it here. The sequence in which, depressed and lonely and hopeless, he invites Hutton to kill him is quite moving—although why he couldn't kill himself is one more of the film's unanswered questions.

Schepisi worked faithfully with Lone, tritely with the others, trickily with his film. Why are there shots from the Iceman's point of view of the fuzzy figures hovering around the operating table as he first returns to consciousness after his long sleep? Why does Schepisi permit the cliché acting of most of the men?

The cinematographer is another Australian, Ian Baker, who has worked on all four of Schepisi's films and now is restraining his weakness for Beauty. At least some of the time here, Baker treats panoramas reticently, therefore well. A special word, too, for the sound editor, Frank Warner, and his colleagues. The soundtrack, in Dolby stereo, is unusually crisp.

But the hope raised by the film's premise is left unsatisfied. I thought that *Iceman* might be a mirror film for *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, a dramatic meeting with the past instead of the future, an encounter with an enlightening past simplicity instead of an encouraging future intellect. This expectation is dashed, and no other is raised. All we get is a lot of lab jabber and quarreling in the midst of which the Iceman pines and from which he finally escapes, mistaking a helicopter for a legendary bird. Nothing happens with the Iceman that is remotely worth all the cinematic trimmings. At the end, as Hutton watches the Iceman's return to his ancestors, he is left sadly comprehending. But this finish is only an escape hatch for the story, not a conclusion, made all the more vapid by the fact that little of genuine interest has happened en route. *Iceman* was a good idea taken up by filmmakers incapable of making good use of it. Schepisi has shown gifts; maybe he ought to go back home where he had more ease and authenticity.

There's more than sweetness and light in their art.

THE DUTCH MASTERS' REVENGE

BY SIMON SCHAMA

PITY POOR GREUZE. In 1769 the French painter, who had won a brilliant reputation for his scenes of family drama and distress, had the temerity to submit a history painting to the Royal Academy. It met with howls of derision. The painter was allowed into the academy, but with the crushing proviso that it was strictly "in his capacity as genre painter," which is to say as a mere anecdotalist. The term itself had been coined to separate the moral loftiness of history paintings (Scripture scenes and chronicles from antiquity) from the baser and more prosaic presentation of randomly recorded episodes. So in the official "hierarchy of genres" that dictated the actual place in which pictures were hung in the Salon, history paintings were at the top of the wall and genre at the bottom. And while Italian art remained the inspiration of the former, Netherlandish art was saddled with the pedigree for the latter. This was to be expected, since it was an eighteenth-century commonplace that the Dutch were morally as well as geographically low types, bogged down in the commonplaces of small beer and cabbages. While not without craft and picturesque charm, their art was hobbled by this imperviousness to the sublime. As Louis XIV liked to say, they were the frogs who were blinded by the sun.

Condescended to as "little masters" for two centuries, the Dutch genre painters at last have their due. In its stunning array of masterpieces, the Philadelphia Museum's spectacular exhibition puts to rest once and for all the notion of genre as an amusing, skillfully contrived but limited art—*Saturday*

Simon Schama is a professor of history at Harvard University.

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Evening Post covers of the seventeenth century. In the process, the imposing barrier which set off "high taste" from "low taste" is itself dismantled. For in their monumental conception and grandeur of execution—they are surprisingly large—many of the paintings on display, like Molenaer's *Woman at Her Toilet (Lady World)*, or even a domestic subject like de Hooch's *Mother Lacing Her Bodice beside a Cradle*, yield nothing at all to more august subject matter.

TO GO around this show is to see clichés about Dutch art explode in small but gratifying puffs of smoke. "The painting of everyday life"—that feeblest of all classifications—is one such happy casualty. There is nothing remotely "everyday" about Molenaer's irate dwarf about to hurl a rock at boy tormentors, chillingly observed by a pair of amused adults and the completely deep-frozen figure of ancient Januarius huddled in a corner. Wintry feelings, hot blood: a rich enigma like so much else on view. Nor is Berchem's image of a Moor handing a parrot to an opulently dressed woman in some imaginary Mediterranean seaport, and doing so with an ambiguously cupped hand to the mouth, exactly a common garden occurrence. Why the parrot, why the hand jive? Narrative mystery hangs on the canvas in ways wholly at odds with the notion of genre as episode without meaning. Even where the subject matter seems mundane, details that seem at first incidental but are in fact peculiarly intrusive—in the corner of one picture, for example, a still life ensemble of burnished pots, winter cabbage, and a broom—take the picture from casual observation to deliberate, idiosyncratic arrangement.

"Serenity" is another vapid stereotype that springs to mind for those accustomed to associate Dutch art with immense cows reposing on heavily-upholstered meadows. But there is nothing at all serene about Brouwer's uncomical peasants fighting in a verminous tavern. One is seen poised to smash a vessel on another's head, a third, his hair pulled to its roots confronting the beholder with his mouth contorted in a screaming "O." Barrack-room humor is equally ambiguous. The great guardroom scenes of Duyster and Duck (which remind us that the Dutch Republic was at war with one set of implacable enemies or another for most of the "golden century") incorporate obligatory jokes; but the soldier who wakes his comrade for the dawn muster with a tickling straw does so in a company of such bleak mirthlessness that our own nervous smirks fade immediately into the martial gloom. The collapsing heaps of rags and stick-like bones that populate Adriaen van de Venne's gallery of rogues and vagabonds might conceivably have been recognizable as comic types. But the seventeenth-century burgher laughed (like us) to relieve himself of his fright at the ominous hordes of the unwashed; van de Venne's picture is as much scary as picaresque.

If we can now see afresh that many of these pictures are charged with some sort of extra-episodic meaning, however fugitive, it is because the exhibition is also a great uncovering. In some cases this is literal. Details that seemed too jarring or downright indecent to fit with the sentimental attributions of title were painted over or replaced with others that reinforced the "innocence" of the scene. Only when Frans van Mieris's copulating dogs (the seventeenth-century Dutch were less prudish than later generations) had been obliterated could it have been supposed that his euphemized *Inn Scene* depicted a gallant encounter between comely maiden and genial cavalier.

Masters of Seventeenth Century Dutch Genre Painting (Philadelphia Museum of Art, March 18-May 13, 1984)

The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century by Svetlana Alpers (University of Chicago Press, $37.50, $17.50 paper)

The most famous of all such sentimental misapprehensions is included in the exhibition: ter Borch's *Parental Admonition* (retaining its traditional billing), which Goethe saw in an engraving and supposed to be a picture of a father soberly upbraiding his daughter. Look as closely as museum security will allow and you will see that the forefinger and thumb of the "father" actually hold a coin, a detail which alters the gesture from admonition to proposition. And by substituting the skull on which Molenaer's *Lady World* rested her feet with a more conventional stool, a puzzle was removed, so that as recently as the 1940s it was thought that the picture of a girl having her blonde tresses combed represented a "preparation for a wedding."

Even when there was no painting-over, such was the strength of the sentimental tradition of "naïve charm" that it could overlook incongruous details that could not, by the remotest stretch of the imagination, be accommodated within a purely naturalistic account of the subject. What could that basketful of instruments of chastisement—a leper's rattle, the scourging birch, the cripple's crutch—be doing suspended over a Jan Steen *Dissolute Household* if it were merely the innocent presentation of the painter's boozy parlor? Why did busts of Cupid or paintings of Venus ostentatiously eavesdrop on scenes of apparently innocent amusement?

It is only since the 1960s, when scholars, led by Professor E. de Jongh, began a systematic decoding of symbolic allusions and visual cross-references (many of them from proverbs, epigrams, and emblems) that the complicated artfulness of the genre painters became properly revealed. Beneath the thin crust of anecdotal detail there was, it appeared, a whole compendium of secondary meaning—sometimes moralizing, sometimes ironic, all clad in the puzzles, riddles, and conundrums in which the Dutch reveled. Even when these mysteries were unlocked (keys—the *claves interpretandi*—make several appearances in the paintings), there was a good deal of demure averting of the eyes by dealers and connoisseurs, who found it painful to discover their unwitting connivance in bawdy humor. Who was to tell the Queen of England that she owned a peerless collection of northern European erotica?

TO THEIR relief, there are less embarrassing disclosures available in the new vision of genre painting. For it is not just the artist's narrative intentions that have been recovered. Careful cleaning of many major paintings on show at Philadelphia has disclosed an extraordinary intensity of color unsuspected in work that was thought of in tones of rosy-cosy prettiness. Ter Borch's way with the brilliance of satin has long been appreciated, but it is the luminosity and saturation of color in Jan Steen and Metsu that come as a surprise. There is a late Adriaen van Ostade, *The Cottage Dooryard*, from the period of his alleged decline, in which the figures are exposed to a sharp clear

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light that breathes plein-air and anticipates the landscape breeziness of the next century. An Isaack van Ostade seems actually to have created the cottage door genre that came to obsess Gainsborough in the 1770s. Now that his *Interior of a Smithy* has been cleaned, it is possible to judge how cunningly Metsu had the point of strongest light come from his blacksmith's glowing forge, another motif that Wright of Derby must surely have emulated. And the great de Hooch nursing scenes, as well as an Emanuel de Witte fretwork of light and shade in a domestic interior, are all penetrated with a light of such radiance and warmth that it seems to change the weather inside the room.

IN MANY respects, the Philadelphia show represents a great milestone in our understanding and appreciation of this art. Which is not at all to say that it is one of those occasions where academics and connoisseurs tell the public what they should be enjoying (or not enjoying); just the opposite, in fact. Even though there are 127 major works of art assembled here, many from private collections and relatively inaccessible galleries, it is the kind of exhibition that wearies neither the foot nor the eye. To suggest, I suppose heretically, that the Vermeers (three, two from the National Gallery and the Met) may be the most beautiful but not the most interesting items, is not to imply that they are exactly dim stuff. But they have to fight for attention with eight gorgeous paintings by ter Borch, five by Jan Steen, six by de Hooch, four by Gerard Dou (including the wonderful *Astronomer by Candlelight*), and picture after picture by artists too often relegated to the little league—Maes, Brekelenkam, Cornelis Bega—all seen here at the top of their form.

It is difficult, in fact, to imagine how any exhibition of this kind could possibly have been presented with more taste and concern to provide information that would assist but not interrupt the excursion of the eye. The installation is largely by themes—merry companies, guardroom scenes, Italianates, domestic interiors—which not only permits rich comparisons on an unprecedented scale, but also restores to the portmanteau category of "genre" the more descriptive terms that the Dutch themselves used to distinguish these different sorts of pictures. It is to the great credit of Peter Sutton and his team that they have managed to convey the essence of new scholarship without turning the occasion into a nine-room seminar.

For those provoked by the exhibition to think again about the "realism" of genre, the exhaustive catalogue offers four-hundred pages of further illumination—a real boon to scholars as well as an accessible introduction to laymen. It also boasts that rare asset these days: color plates of every picture in the show. In both catalogue and wall captions, the symbolism of genre, sometimes overt, sometimes covert, is treated more as a great tease than a mandatory sermon. With the cunning of good humor, Honthorst's *The Merry Fiddler* is the first image to confront the visitor, like a showground barker enticing customers with an affably raised goblet of wine and a brightly polished fiddle. And that theme of complicated mischief follows through to van der Werff's wickedly grinning *Boy with a Mousetrap* that closes the exhibition. Thus, while the vexed issue of iconography is stinted neither in the catalogue nor the visual presentation, it is presented so as to tickle your fancy rather than spoil your fun.

SPOILING THE fun was one of the problems that seems to have weighed on Svetlana Alpers's mind in the writing of *The Art of Describing*. She feels that the whole business of uncovering implicit meaning in Dutch pictures by decoding emblematic allusions has gratuitously surrendered the immediacy of Dutch art to the professional obscurantism of the scholars. That project, which has been at the heart of much scholarship since the 1960s, emphasizes the importance of textually born images, at the expense of what she takes to be the typically northern preoccupation with more purely visual observation. This happened, she claims, as a result of the misconceived application of a methodology more properly suited to the classical traditions of Italian art to what, in her view, is the quite different sensibility of northern Europe. Without reverting to either the sentimentalism or the naïve naturalism of the nineteenth century, she sets about providing an account of Dutch art that she believes to be more appropriate to those distinctive qualities.

Prompted by what she argues is the characteristically northern urge for an empirical examination of nature, the Dutch worked to survey and scrutinize, rather than imagine and allude. Symbolic elucidation, if not banished altogether, is demoted in favor of the paramount importance of optical perception. Where the heraldic device of the iconographers has been the emblem book, for Alpers it is the map, the camera obscura, the optical device. Where written texts actually occur in the paintings, it is, Alpers argues, to reinforce the literalness of description, rather than to invoke some extra-representational moral or conceit. So the reflections caught in Dutch art are those of the mirror, not of the pondering soul.

Framed around the credo that "the eye was a central means of self-representation [in the north] and visual experience a central mode of self-consciousness," *The Art of Describing* is Svetlana Alpers's counterrevolutionary manifesto, though many of those whom it has taken by storm may be forgiven for not knowing that a revolution in interpretation had happened in the first place. This is not the place and I am probably not the person (since its publishers made me an unwitting puffer for their dust jacket) to supply a thorough review. But in the context of the Philadelphia exhibition, it is worth peering through the settling dust to see how the somewhat battle-scarred landscape of Dutch art history looks at present.

To say that Alpers's book has left the Dutch art historical community badly shaken would, I think, be an understatement. Though some of its eminences affect an attitude of mild irritation, the signs of quiet rage are unmistakable. And the almost universal enthusiasm with which the book was greeted by the art historical world beyond the confines of Dutch culture only added salt to the wound. The Dutch found themselves cast in the unenviable role of the pedants who have conspired to deprive the public of obvious and simple truths through their musty preoccupations with emblem books and Calvinist pieties. Perhaps understandably, if ungenerously, the professionals remain somewhat irked by the acclaim that has greeted her book. Professor de Jongh, whose work is inevitably its main target, referred to it in the symposium launching the exhibit as "that astonishing book," and he was not meaning to be kind. Because scholarly criticism invariably plods behind the calendar of popular reviewing, the iconographers have yet to have their say in

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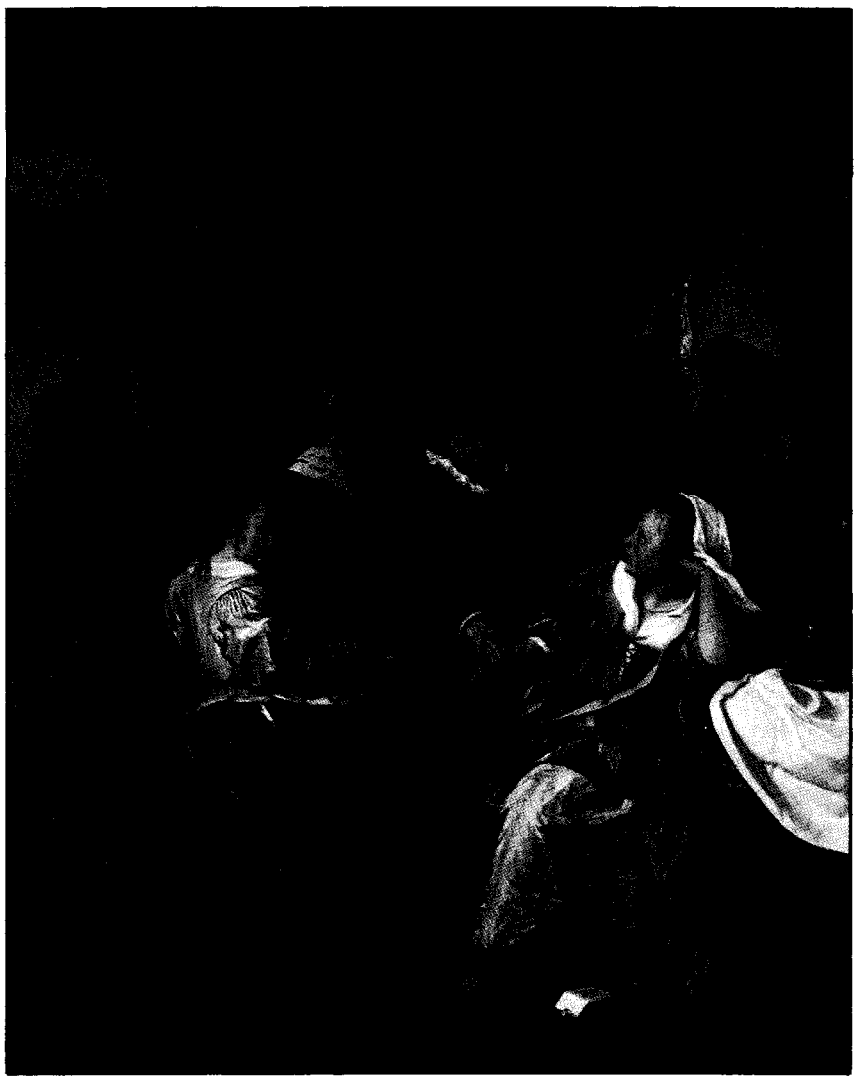
print, but the sounds of sharpening quills and simmering curare are becoming distinctly audible.

Of course, it was inevitable that so operatic a performance as *The Art of Describing* would be met with choruses of both bravos and boos. It is not a book that can easily be ignored, for it is written with a pungency and intellectual density that set it apart from the more leisurely and cautious conventions of art historical scholarship. Alpers's interest in the social sciences (there are the inevitable genuflections in the direction of Princeton and Clifford Geertz, who would be a rich man these days if he could sell his acknowledgements) and her immersion in the history of ideas made the singularity of her work more conspicuous—but won her no admiration from art historians traditionally suspicious of flirtations with other disciplines. While the intellectual identity of those who booed was quite predictable, then, the numerous enthusiasts comprised a varied claque. Their several standpoints differed, but they have all responded readily to Alpers's insistence on "what you see is what you get." They were all united, at any rate, in finding the notion that Dutch art might be susceptible to iconographic interpretation extremely disquieting. So, who were they?



THE DOCTOR'S VISIT BY JAN STEEN, 1663-65, THE JOHN G. JOHNSON COLLECTION, PHILADELPHIA

The first group were traditional connoisseurs, collectors, dealers, and critics, all of whom had long cherished the assumption of the undemanding simplicity of Dutch art. They were, for example, quite happy with the unrefined categories of "merry companies" as being just so many gatherings of gents and ladies indulging their pleasures, and did not particularly wish to be disabused of these charming fantasies in the name of heavy learning. At precisely the opposite pole of critical sensibility, some Marxist art historians have predictably seen in Dutch art the "bourgeois realism" that is supposed to betray a dispassionately acquisitive fascination with the use of things, an early form of commodity fetishism. In that view, it was always implausible that bourgeois materialism should be held to mask a deep and grave preoccupation with the fragility of worldly experience and its subjection to moral rumination.

A third group of art historians, working in areas other than Dutch culture, in Italian or in French art, have been only too eager to endorse Alpers's notion of a sensibility frontier running across the Alps; such a line re-appropriated the high learning of iconography for the realm of gods and heroes rather than washerwomen and cheesemongers. Finally, there was a fourth group of cultural historians, accustomed to argue that meaning was always conditioned by modes of visual perception, who see in Alpers's shared preoccupation an acceptable extension of their rules of thumb.

Battle lines have not been quite so simply drawn, however. The sudden cold shower brought on by Alpers's book has in some degree made the more feverish exponents of the iconographic approach pause for a moment's reflection. Professor de Jongh's own contribution to the symposium held in Philadelphia was directed as much against the capricious excesses of his imitators as to supporting his general line. And even before Svetlana Alpers's book appeared, a healthy skepticism was setting in about applying the iconographic method to some areas of Dutch art, especially landscapes, where emblematic cross-references seemed forced and implausible.

Which is not to say, however, that *The Art of Describing* is beginning to command greater assent. For the difficulties that many Dutch art historians have with the book are not just those of its categorical tone and the way in which it somehow transforms problems into axioms. They are also troubled by the use of evidence and examples, especially since the general public's unfamiliarity with Dutch texts is such that any learned citations are often treated with uncritical gratitude. Alpers presents partial views of a figure or document as though they were the only possible readings. Constantijn Huygens, for example, the secretary to the Stadholder Frederick Henry and a man whose classical humanist learning Alpers freely acknowledges, is nonetheless mystifyingly presented as

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though he were really much more in sympathy with what the author calls the Baconian method—that is to the experimental empiricism she associates with figures such as the inventor Cornelis Drebbel.

It would, in fact, be difficult to overstate Huygens's addiction to classical learning and style. But the problem here is not whether Huygens's saturation in classical humanism makes him a very odd choice to represent the notion of an unliterary, optically roving, nature-measuring culture. It is whether or not the two modes of culture could not quite happily coexist within the same personality (as indeed I believe they did in the educated nation). Almost all the historians have commented on the manner in which deep religious conviction ultimately controlled Huygens's taste for polite learning. What might be called the native and international strains in his cultural temper, then, not only lived side by side with each other but were actually interdependent. The dichotomy, in short, seems needless.

STILL LIFE BY DAVID BAILLY, 1651. STEDELIJK MUSEUM, LEIDEN

Were "northern" and "southern" ways of seeing as distinctive as Alpers claims? An Italianate taste does not seem to have been particularly alien to the Dutch, at least not to their elite. The Philadelphia show has an entire room filled with the work of the Netherlandish painters who lived and worked in Rome and produced exactly that kind of hybrid trans-Alpine scene which Alpers's general thesis precludes. Landscape and genre painters alike were able to produce "italianizing" scenes because evidently taste and the market demanded them.

The book seems full of these unnecessary divorces. The notion that the ubiquitousness of letters, or the insertion of readable text, deliberately strips pictures of their suggestiveness is one of the most provoking. There is a Dirck Hals portrait in the Philadelphia show of a woman with just such a letter set against a painting of a ship. While it seems most likely that the ship functions as a stock poetic metaphor for the journeying heart, speculation need not end there; no picture could beg more urgently for the narrative engagement of the beholder. Nor does the incorporation of explicit mottoes and proverbs in Jan Steen's genre painting impoverish the multiple possibilities of interpretations, since the painter's apparent moral ambivalence between transgression and repentance remains delightfully notorious.

It is when Alpers's general arguments alight on particular pictures that her plea for restoring the obvious seems actually undone by her own excessively complicated response. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the painting chosen for the jacket of her book, to which she devotes a great deal of attention in the very heart of her argument: the combination self-portrait and still life by David Bailly (reproduced above). As with Huygens, it seems selected out of sheer brazen courage, since it is the unlikeliest possible testimony to the Dutch painters' "embrace of craft." "We can call it an assemblage of materials made by nature and worked by man. It is a catalogue." Well, there is indeed a lot of stuff lying around on the painter's table and some, not all of it, might be considered worked materials, while other objects (bubbles, wilting roses and, most conspicuously, a skull) hardly belong to this category. Alpers goes on to associate the arrangement with a "Baconian" view of craft as an exposure of the nature of things; "they squeeze and mold nature in order to reveal her."

Now, for an account which professes to restore the obvious to interpretations that have somehow strayed from that path toward the overly academic and textual, this seems startling. It misses something completely obvious about the painting, something that could hardly be more obvious were the artist to lean out of the canvas and shout "Hey bud, vanity of vanities, know what I mean?" In fact, Bailly virtually does this by supplying the verse from Ecclesiastes in the lower right-hand corner. And if one asks oneself what possible meaning one could gather from all these sundry objects *together*—the fading roses, the skull, the pipe, the incense burner ("for my days are like smoke"), the book (of life), and the hour glass (at right)—the answer isn't exactly obscure. When placed together with Saint Sebastian, the artist's palette,

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the print of the Hals lutenist, and the pipe, it takes no great leap of interpretation to deduce that it is the ephemerality of beauty (and indeed other aspects of worldliness, suggested, for instance, by the coins) that is being alluded to.

Of course Alpers sees this, and actually admits it as though it were just an afterthought, at the end of a prolonged discussion of the picture as an instance of the betrayal of nature and the primacy of craft. This reluctant concession in any case is immediately superseded by the observation that "the very brilliance of execution" somehow subverts its moralizing. But brilliance of execution (the exquisite rendering of the bubble, for example) is in fact as necessary to making a good moral point as to undermining it. At any rate, it seems too categorical to insist that the moral is so much disingenuous lip service before an exercise in aesthetic self-admiration. What is incontrovertible is that a seventeenth-century Dutchman would have immediately comprehended the "vanity" of the handsome objects, while the relative priority of beauty or piety would have been more ambiguous. So far from the painting clinching Alpers's case, it raises difficulties about the exclusiveness of her categories in the most emphatic way.

Paradoxically, it seems to me that the project of rescuing Dutch art from the textual cross-references of the iconographers is actually undermined by Alpers's own intellectual sophistication. She has a point when she argues that art historians' enthusiasm for emblem books (especially those of the moralizing poet and Grand Pensionary, Jacob Cats) has led them into uncritical transpositions between emblems and paintings. But she bafflingly invokes instead the shades of Bacon and Kepler as the true lights by which Dutch sensibilities were guided. There remains no convincing reason to suppose, however, that their inductivism ought to be taken as a lodestar any more than the moralists' sermonizing.

Even if one were to accept the thesis that "the art of describing" really gets to the heart of Dutch art, it begs the enormous question of just what it is that we think is being described. For the notion of a natural universe that could be classified or investigated without reference to the Creator—a kind of amoral cosmos explored through a dispassionate lens—is about as far as one can imagine from the mentality of seventeenth-century Christian culture (let alone one compounded of Calvinism and humanism in about equal parts). Even Bacon, who is made to stand in somewhat misleadingly as the authorizer of the morally unoccluded survey of the eye, observes in the first book of *The Advancement of Learning* that

> there be two principal duties and services besides ornament and illustration, which philosophy and human learning do perform to faith and religion. The one, because they are an effectual inducement to the glory of God. For as the psalms and other scriptures do often invite us to consider and magnify the great and wonderful works of God so if we should rest only in the contemplation of the exterior of them as they first offer themselves to our senses, we should do like an injury unto the majesty of God, as if we should judge or construe of the store of some excellent jeweller by that only which is set out toward the street in his shop.

IT WOULD be a great shame if the Philadelphia exhibition were to be used as a kind of umpire between warring factions in this argument over ways of looking at Dutch art. Not that this seems likely to happen, for the many thousands who make their way to the museum to wallow in the splendors on show will certainly remain happily oblivious to all the academic dogfighting. And even when it is thrust on them by the relatively uninsistent wall captions, some spectators at least display a healthy skepticism. "Give me a break, willya," was one plaintive response I overheard to the indication that the bird that Metsu's hunter dangles in front of his lady in *The Hunter's Gift* was in fact an invitation to sexual intercourse. (*Vogelen*—"to bird"—was indeed slang for exactly that.)

Even supposing that the pictures in the exhibition could be summoned like witnesses to the stand, however, it is doubtful whether a decisive verdict could ever be entered. For what seems to me to be apparent is that by far the greatest number offer the possibility of both a "looking" and a "reading." Perhaps it is best to stand back and enjoy the ambiguities, for we shall never really know whether Jan Steen meant us to chuckle at his roughhouse uproar and lubricious innuendos or to ruminate piously on moral trespass, or both. We shall never really know who is the "real" Steen: the wholly pious artist of the beautiful *Prayer Before the Meal* or

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the portrait of the artist as the Shrovetide fool, *Pekelhareng* (Pickled Herring), in *The Doctor's Visit*.

This marvelous uncertainty seems to me to be wholly in keeping with the complexity of Dutch culture. Of all great European civilizations, the Netherlands was the most surprised by its astonishing rise to wealth and imperial power. For a people tutored by pastors and scholars to believe that Jehovah's special favor belonged to the humble, the cornucopia was as much an embarrassment as a happy windfall. And its culture was a mass of contradictions: a republic with a Prince, a Calvinist Church with a humanist elite, a world empire that set most store by defending its tiny patch of incoherently defined territory.

Most of all, perhaps, it was a capitalism that refused to shrug off a Christian conscience. Matthijs Naiveu's picture near the end of the exhibition is the most telling witness to such perplexities. A well-heeled burgher is buying a length of gold brocade in a shop, but as he does so, he gives some money to a begging boy. In the foreground a smirking boy, the stock interlocutor of conventional wisdoms, throws a hand of dice. In a single composition, then, the artist has the nemesis of wealth bought off with the gesture of philanthropy—piety commending plutocracy. And as the act of charity appears to reinforce the distance between the rich and the poor, the knowing figure of Fortuna above the scene sabotages the illusion. It is but a throw of the dice that separates the fortunate from the miserable.

Even at the zenith of their power and splendor, the Dutch had this sobering thought on their minds. Which is not to say that their art is hag-ridden with somber visions and phantoms of destruction. I mean merely that along with other kinds of bourgeois innovation—futures trading and speculation in downtown development—the Dutch pioneered in the schizophrenia between matter and morals that is characteristic of acquisitive societies. Hegel, who was perforce ignorant of the special language of their art, fondly supposed it to take place in a perpetual "Sunday of life." While we now know that this notion of the Dutch as existing in a sort of festive limbo was a sentimental delusion, it would be equally misleading were we now to assume it was exclusively about the Monday to Friday of life instead. Perhaps the secret of the pleasures that the Dutch disclose so generously to us is that work and play, solemnity and merriment, describing and prescribing were happily confused. Faced with pictures that rejoice in the richness of their ambiguity, who are we to bully them into our bloodless, modern clarity?

POLITICS AND A POET

Children in Exile: Poems 1968-1984 by James Fenton

(Random House, 110 pp., $11.95)

James Fenton is a brilliant poet of great technical virtuosity. His poetry is plunged in the real life of the kind that we see on television screens, read about in the newspapers, and (a happy few) discuss at High Tables. In the first two sections of this volume there are poems about recollections of the bombing of Germany in 1944 and 1945, about Vietnamese refugees haunted by terrible memories of their bombings, about his own experiences as a political journalist visiting Vietnam in 1972-73. After these poems of great immediacy, there are poems in the manner of Auden's poetry of psychoanalytic parables mixed with an ominous sense of the neurotic forces moving through contemporary history. In this section Fenton, like Auden, seems to be drawing strongly on memories of his own Anglican upbringing in Yorkshire. In Auden's case it was the poet's mother, in Fenton's his father, who was the theologian.

In this phase of Fenton's poetry, as with Auden's in the 1930s, one feels, at one and the same time, that the poet has created within the poem a mysterious world with mysterious laws which work by their own logic, and yet also that there is a need of some ideology or system of belief which would make everything clear. One feels, too, that there are occasional references to some private area of the poet's life—perhaps to childhood memories—which are withheld from the reader. The feeling of Auden in some of these poems is so strong that it seems more like identification with his work than imitation of it. But because Fenton, as it were, takes over Auden, it also becomes Fenton's own world, as in these lines from "Nest of Vampires":

> From the bare planks the reflected sun
> lights up
> The white squares on the wall released by
> pictures
> Depicting Tivoli, an imperial
> Family in its humiliation,
> Cows up to their knees in a cool
> stream
>
> And a man in Dovedale reaching for a
> branch.
> What fell behind the desk, what levelled
> the leg
> Of the card-table, what had been presumed lost
> Has been found. In that chest there
> was a box
> Containing a piece of white coral,
>
> A silver cigar-cutter shaped like a pike,
> A chipping taken from the Great Pyramid
> And a tribal fetish stolen during war:
> 'This is something shameful. You must
> never
> Mention its existence to a soul.'

Some of Fenton's greatest successes belong to this section of the book—the evocative poem "Wind" and the wonderfully sustained "Chosun," a poem about the relationship of an elaborate mythology or theology to the lives of Koreans. This, incidentally, is an example of one aspect of Fenton's poetry: that it is packed with information, anthropological, scientific, and political. Fenton is also obsessed with vocabularies, particularly the scientific, which in his fifth section, called "Exempla," he turns into a kind of elaborate parody of scientific definitions—serious parody, if you like, because he shows how admirable, if absurd, they are:

> . . . Wallroth
> described the fungus as possessing
> a pezizaform hairy sporochodium
> with a flattened powdery surface layer
> of globose, vesiculate, hyaline conidia.

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It could be said that some of this is a University (Oxford) in-joke. There is a very exhilarating tour de force, "Letter to John Fuller," in which the poet ridicules the view he attributes to Al Alvarez, that it is chic for poets living in our time to commit suicide. Addressed to John Fuller, who was, I understand, Fenton's tutor at Oxford, it has the lightness and control of a whipmaster at a circus:

Death is the envy of the hicks,
The last crap shot, the final fix,
It is the burning of the ricks.
  Lovelier than sex, it
Beckons us home across the Styx
  And we must exit.

I WANT to emphasize the lightness, fun, and gaiety of some of Fenton's work, because without the wit, his most serious poems might seem weighed down by their subject matter, which is intensely political—not so much in being partisan or ideological, as in being saturated in the *terribilita* of the contemporary political world scene. Here he certainly parts company with Auden, for Auden renounced the whole connection of his poetry with the world produced by politics. He did so, I think, not really so much for the rather frivolous reasons he offered (that poetry has never at any time had the slightest effect on politics) as because he thought that it was indecent for the inner dream worlds created by poetic imagination to take as subject matter the outer world of a nightmare reality which results from modern power politics.

The one or two exceptions to Auden's self-imposed rule of not writing political poetry ("The Shield of Achilles" and the short poem he wrote about the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968) prove, I think, his rule. Once or twice the political nightmare occupied his soul, became his own private nightmare, which he exorcised in a poem which is a devastating analysis of the effects of power politics. But for the most part, if confronted with the effects of the totalitarian regime or the military occupation upon human victims, Auden must have thought: the fact that I can sit here, living the kind of life I live, and write a poem about, say, Hiroshima, shows that I do not—on the level of the truth of my total imaginative involvement as a poet and not just as, say, someone who might join some public protest about this—care about it. If I did care, I would almost certainly be destroyed as poet by my imaginative realization of it. I would realize on the one hand that the incursion of such public subject matter into the poem destroys it as poetry and on the other hand that the poetry cannot do anything to stop the public evil. Poetry provides pleasure, but there are certain realities which it is obscene to turn to the uses of pleasure. Moreover, to attempt to do so on the level of that kind of public reality of horror exposes the frivolity of poetry.

Fenton, I am sure, is fully aware of these objections to writing poetry about the horrors which fill newspapers and telephone screens. It is no reflection on him to say that he comes to the reader armed with credentials and a deliberate strategy. The credentials are that he has been involved as a journalist in the places he is writing about. And he is honest in writing poetry in which the poet is journalist, reporter—simply that, and not one who parades his poetic heart on his sleeve. The irony which he employs in his description of lunch on a battlefield in Cambodia with Prince Norodom Chantaraingsey is that of a journalist talking with fellow journalists at a bar:

On every bottle, Napoleon Bonaparte
Pleaded for the authenticity of the spirit.
They called the empties Dead Soldiers
And rejoiced to see them pile up at our
  feet.

—"Dead Soldiers"

In these war poems Fenton does not adopt a poetic persona, but that of someone whom he is addressing who is not a poet but who may be taken to share Fenton's view about the matters discussed. The most successful poem in the book is that which provides its title, "Children in Exile." This is dedicated to friends of his living in the Italian countryside near Florence—an American publisher and his wife—who have adopted a Cambodian family with its four children, rescued from being the victims of Pol Pot:

They have found out: it is hard to escape
  from Cambodia,
    Hard to escape the justice of Pol Pot,
When they are called to report in dreams
  to their tormentors.
    One night is merciful, the next is not.

The dreams are terrifying nightmares, and sometimes they occur during the day, as here with one of the children:

I saw him once, doubled in pain, scratching his legs.
  This was in Pisa at the Leaning
    Tower.
We climbed to the next floor and his attackers vanished
  As fast as they had come. He thought
    some power

Some influence lurked in certain rooms
  and corners.
  But why was I not suffering as well?

THE REAL horror of Cambodia is filtered through the realistic dreams of the children who have been saturated in that horror. In "A German Requiem," a sequence of poems about a bombed German town, or towns, Fenton writes about the inability of the people living there to remember the horrors. Forgetting becomes a kind of diminution and magnification of them, both at the same time:

It is not what they built. It is what they
  knocked down.
It is not the houses. It is the spaces
  between the houses.
It is not the streets that exist. It is the
  streets that no longer exist.
It is not your memories which haunt you.
It is not what you have written down.
It is what you have forgotten, what you
  must forget.

In an epigraph—a quotation from Hobbes's *Leviathan*—this is related, ironically enough, to Hobbes's theory that Imagination and Memory are the same thing: the fading of immediate past impressions in the mind. Here Fenton's strategy for imagining our terrible contemporary realities in poetry is rather like that of a photographer who photographs a scene, placing two or three filters across the lens in order to concentrate the scene by giving it some hallucinatory quality.

In several of these poems, Fenton is, then, clearly political. Clearly, too, he is not detached. He has political sympathies. In his poems about Germany and Cambodia, one feels these sympathies—liberal and socialist, I should guess—but at the same time a kind of absence of any ideology where, with Brecht, there would be communism, with Auden, Christianity. That there is this absence, especially of communism, probably throws some light on our time. Surely in the 1930s, Fenton would have been writing the kind of poetry that John Cornford (or even Auden) attempted to write, about the Marxist his-

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torical-materialist interpretation of contemporary history. One feels that in the end—perhaps because it has become impossible for someone like him to hold such a belief today—Fenton is driven back onto his own humanity. There is a kind of inevitability about the rather avuncular ending of "Children in Exile" which reveals, surely, the strengths, and also the weaknesses, of this position:

Let them come to the crest of the road
when the morning is fine
With Florence spread like honey on
the plain,
Let them walk through the ghostless
woods, let the guns be silent,
The tiger never catch their eye again.
They are thriving I see. I hope they always
thrive
Whether in Italy, England or France.
Let them dream as they wish to dream.
Let them dream

Of Jesus, America, maths, Lego, music
and dance.

Somehow it seems at once too much and too little to ask.

STEPHEN SPENDER

Stephen Spender is the author of *The Thirties and After: Poetry, Politics, People 1930s-1970s* (Random House), among other books.

TOPIC OF CANCER

The Apocalyptics: Politics, Science, and the Big Cancer Lie by Edith Efron

(Simon & Schuster, 512 pp., $19.95)

Edith Efron would like to shake the cancer-fighting agencies to their foundations with this book, and perhaps she will. It is an investigative polemic that wields an ax against the government. Its theme is the corruption of science.

I think Efron began with a target a bit smaller than this. She set out to rebut the cancer alarms that appeared in the popular media during the Carter Administration, particularly in a best-seller by Samuel Epstein called *The Politics of Cancer*, published in 1978. It predicted a new "epidemic" of cancer caused by synthetic chemicals. Efron writes that, as she bent to her task, she realized the press—except for Epstein, an M.D.—reported fairly accurately what it learned from the scientists. The problem was with the scientists. They misled us, she says. She is especially scathing on a "cancer policy" document written in 1980 by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration that codified in Federal Register prose some Epsteinisms that offend her.

Like Epstein, Efron writes best-sellers. Her books include *The News Twisters* (1973) and *A Time for Truth* (1978) with ex-Treasury Secretary William Simon. The message of her new book may also be popular. The carcinogen-of-the-week routine has become a bore. People have lost patience for toxicological shoot-outs—whether the fight is started by Dow's hired guns or Nader's raiders. And they may want to hear, as Efron believes, that plastic and saccharin aren't so bad, and that pesticides are no worse than spinach and boiled beef. Finally, they may like Efron's idea that we have been tricked by a conspiracy. That always holds an audience.

Efron writes that the federal health agencies have defrauded the public, building an empire on the premise that cancer can be prevented by regulating chemicals. She indicts their best and brightest leaders, hauling to the dock some villains it would be flattering to be among. They include Donald Kennedy, the former head of the Food and Drug Administration, now president of Stanford University; David Rall, an old hand at sorting real from imagined chemical threats, now head of the National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences; Umberto Saffiotti, a principled senior scientist at the National Cancer Institute, whom Efron calls "one of the founding fathers of the contemporary crusade against industrial cancer"; the respected triumvirate from New York University—Roy Albert, Norton Nelson, and Arthur Upton; and just about everybody who has guided the national effort since 1970 to control chemical hazards.

They are not accused of petty forgery—the ink-spots-on-mice variety—but of something bigger. Efron calls it "the substitution of moral concepts for missing data." By this she means that the cancer fighters rode to power on our ignorance and their own piety. They have frightened us with suggestive data, ignored things that would calm us, and hidden the inconsistencies with talk about society's duty to protect itself from hazards that cannot even be measured.

The "Big Cancer Lie," as she labels it, is the omission of crucial data to foster mistaken beliefs. These include the notions that (1) most cancers are induced by man-made chemicals, (2) lab tests can distinguish clearly between carcinogens and noncarcinogens, and (3) the number of people dying of cancer could be reduced by cracking down and con-

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trolling industrial chemicals. None of this is true, Efron says, but agencies like the Food and Drug Administration and the National Cancer Institute snuggled up to these ideas between 1978 and 1981 anyway.

Here's how it happened, according to Efron. The lie begins with the unknown. Researchers can't explain exactly how tumors are started or stopped, and they know little about the mechanism by which chemicals in the diet produce cancer. Academics concede their ignorance, but public officials don't. They stress the positive: their plan to save us from cancer. As any preacher knows, if you are uncertain of the path to salvation, you'd better not betray your doubts, for you may lose your congregation. In religion and politics, losing your congregation means losing your business. Efron thinks cancer fighters in the United States fell head over heels into the salvation business and promised things they did not know how to deliver. The Japanese, French, and British did not make the same mistake, Efron explains, because they are not as susceptible to apocalyptic movements.

Scrambling for a plan, the cancer fighters watered down the rhetoric and adopted the dogma of a popular sect, Efron says. Its patron saint is Rachel Carson. Its chief tenet is that cancer is caused by synthetic things. A subtenet is that a new threat—industrial chemistry—overtook the earth sometime during World War II when factories began to mass produce pesticides, plastics, and food additives. In this vision, cancer is the Black Death of the twentieth century, a punishment for ill-gotten gains.

Although eccentric, the dogma has power. It has also given the guardians against cancer a full-time job: regulating the industrial threat. This task keeps them so busy, Efron says, they never take the time to reflect on the weakness of its premise. They ignore evidence that nature is every bit as "evil" as industry. Efron doesn't. One technical chapter does nothing but list natural carcinogens, giving scores of dangerous substances such as grilled hamburger, metals, oxygen, peanut butter, pepper and spices, sassafras, smoked fish, tea, and vegetable oils. Meantime, the cancer fighters have snared industry in red tape and scared the public. Efron believes the government would do better if it published lists of proved carcinogens and let others do the speculative work.

That is Efron's argument. The evidence she cites is massive, making her book nobody's idea of pleasant weekend reading. She says she spent four years plowing through five hundred heavy books and fifteen thousand articles on cancer. Excerpts from them dot her angry commentary like bunkers on a great, rolling battlefield. Her fusillade is almost too powerful for the subject she attacks, which is one of the most complex and sore issues in science policy. It is the question of what the government ought to do about dangers that are real, but too subtle to measure accurately.

For the scientists who bear the brunt of her attack, the message is quite familiar. They hear it every week from industry's agents seeking relief from some federal decision or another. The government scientists' response is: show us a better way to control dangerous chemicals and we will use it. They agree that cancer is an unsolved mystery. But as the killer of one in four Americans, it cannot be regarded as merely an academic puzzle. It is a national health problem and an economic problem as well. According to the latest epidemiology, "environmental factors" in the broad sense trigger most cancers, say 80 percent. Of these, 30 percent are caused by smoking. Pesticides like ethylene dibromide (E.D.B.) do cause cancer, as do some food additives and job-related chemicals. Some say that all of these special, synthetic hazards are known to be responsible for no more than a small fraction (8 percent) of cancers. That estimate itself is in dispute, like everything in this area. Yet it is clear that most cancers are caused by "environmental" and dietary factors.

Imperfect knowledge is not an excuse for passivity, however. Marvin Schneiderman, a former Cancer Institute official and one of the villains in Efron's book, cites the famous example of John Snow, a nineteenth-century Londoner whom epidemiologists claim as a founder of their discipline. He was denounced by *The London Times* for his fanatical, "bullying" tactics in campaigning against cholera. Snow noticed that one London neighborhood was more vulnerable than others and gave voice to the weird idea that cholera was traveling through the water pipes. London's water was supplied by private companies in those days, and Snow observed that one company's line fed the most afflicted area.

Many years later, researchers explained that the cholera bacterium, which lives in the human gut, had made its way from sewage into the drinking water and triggered epidemic outbreaks. The water companies all used the Thames as a source, but one company tapped the river below a sewage outfall. Snow understood none of this, but he grasped the essentials. The city fathers resisted. He took matters into his own hands and removed the handle from the Broad Street pump. As if by a miracle, the incidence of cholera dropped.

Counting The Ways

for Virginia and Ward

Beyond expectation, or toward it,
there being at least three ways, other
than making love, to make love:
money,
for instance, might count: the sheer freedom
to climax an evening with *Poire*, far after,
say, a Chablis *Grand Cru Vaudésir*.
And over, and in between bottles,
mind:
not preset intelligence, tuned
by degrees to Plato or Chekhov, but
mind-rise: turning through Brubeck to Mozart
and back, as the occasion rises: learning
the music as it is voiced, and gains
from the dark that surrounds;
laughter
not last or first, nor as a refusal
of tears, but according to one's
inmost need to redeem; given
how dark invades, laughter of all
most surely:
before, during, and after.

PHILIP BOOTH

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It is more difficult to show a relationship between carcinogens and the cancers they trigger. Many have a latency period of twenty, thirty, or even forty years; a generation passes between the initial cause and the final appearance of the disease. For example, a person may be exposed to five or six important compounds in a lifetime, each one a suspected lung cancer inducer. At the age of 60, cancer appears. The problem is to discover retrospectively which suspect was the real killer. The task is made harder by the fact that Americans are extremely mobile. No one keeps the same job, stays in the same neighborhood, uses the same doctor, or eats the same food long enough to allow for rigorous observation and comparison.

THIS IS why animals are asked to serve as stand-ins for people in chemicals testing. Researchers do not know exactly how to interpret a mouse cancer in human terms. But they do know that virtually all chemicals that cause cancer in humans (except arsenic) also cause cancer in animals. They aren't certain that it is correct to read the data in reverse, extrapolating from animal to man. But the alternative to poisoning mice for a test on carcinogenicity is to poison people. No one proposes that, at least not in public.

Animal tests are often confused and contradictory. And, of course, they can signal "false positives," setting off an alarm when there is no danger. This happened with some infamous research at M.I.T. on nitrites in meat, discussed at length in Efron's book; after announcing a rule to ban nitrites, the Food and Drug Administration had to drop everything because the lab work at M.I.T. had been horrendously botched. In general, though, animal tests are more likely to give false negatives. The reason is that the person running the test must be patient and clever to record an effect as subtle as carcinogenicity. In statistical terms, a test must prove that the association between a chemical and a cancer has less than a 5 percent chance of turning up by coincidence. The flip side of this is that 95 percent of the time one would expect not to find the association. Toxicologists know this. "If you want negative results, it's easy," Schneiderman says. "Just make sure all your studies are small and sloppy."

Criticism like Efron's and fiascos like the M.I.T. research have had an impact. The government is trying to shore up the traditions of the cancer-fighting agencies and improve the quality of animal tests. For example, the White House science office this spring will publish a new statement of principles dealing with chemical carcinogenesis. Even before publication, it has drawn fire from one food industry scientist for being too much in line with old traditions, defining the term "carcinogen" too broadly. Because of the emotional and legal problems it can cause, some manufacturers would like the term narrowed to refer only to what are known as "complete carcinogens," the most potent substances that both initiate cancer and promote its growth. (At the moment, simple promoters or initiators are known as carcinogens as well.) It's not clear how many potential carcinogens might be relieved of their stigmata in this fashion.

So far the pressure to narrow the definition has been resisted. The paper's editor, Ronald Hart of the F.D.A.'s center for toxicological research in Jefferson, Arkansas, says that the principles have been read and overwhelmingly endorsed by more than eighty of the world's experts in carcinogenesis. This degree of consensus is unusual on any subject.

AS THE government clarifies its thinking on chemical regulation, a change of attitude is taking place in the research community as well. It has affected many of the people Efron skewers, including, for example, Bruce Ames, a University of California biologist and creator of the most important quick test for chemical hazards. (It uses bacteria instead of animals.) He once worried about the "enormous possible carcinogenic risks" from industrial chemicals, and designed the Ames test as a way to screen these hordes of new compounds coming into the marketplace. In the 1970s he led a controversial campaign to keep children's pajamas free of Tris, a flameproofing compound he considered carcinogenic. But he seems to view the world differently now. Impressed by the variety and potency of natural carcinogens, Ames says he may have been wrong. He told *The New York Times* in March: "I think we got off on the wrong track. We're concentrating almost exclusively on little bits of pollution and man-made things and completely ignoring enormous amounts of natural mutagens and carcinogens. I'm starting to question our whole way of thinking."

Ames's remark belies the image of a monolithic empire of cancer warriors Efron has conjured up. She actually calls it the "malevolent cancer prevention establishment." Ames's confession of self-doubt is a small point in itself, but it illustrates a mistake in this book. In attacking one side in a roiling scientific quarrel, Efron has taken aim at a moving target. She fails to convey the provisional nature of all assertions

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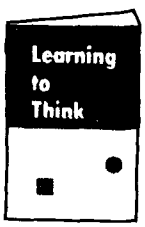

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about cancer, including the ones she relies on. The "facts" themselves shift and change as new information becomes available. That is why it seems pointless to dwell so long on data, as Efron does, trying to prove that more scientists should have said in 1978 what many will agree to now: that natural carcinogens may be as important as man-made ones.

Efron's real quarrel, it seems to me, is not with the science at all, but with the activist impulse in some scientists. Although she never does spell out fully what she would have the government do, it is clear she would like it to do less. Perhaps, as one chapter suggests, he would like it to draw up lists of things that have been proven beyond any doubt to cause cancer in humans. It's not clear what she would do about the chemicals on this list, because she is not interested in making proposals.

There are some implicit assumptions in Efron's wait-and-see approach that aren't necessarily better than those of the activists she belittles. One assumption is that by waiting, we will be able to see better what is happening. But because of the built-in problems mentioned before, epidemiology is not likely to become more precise in the near future. A long wait, then, may bring only a very small improvement of insight into the patterns of human cancer. A second assumption is that cancers induced by chemicals are not a big problem, or not big enough to justify the terrible cost of regulating every suspect compound. There is no hard evidence for this view, either, certainly no more than for thinking that industrial chemistry is fathering an epidemic of cancer. So the physical data only carry us part way, and it requires conviction to decide what ought to be done, whether it be to wait a while or to act now.

The trouble is that—as in Caesar's day—many degrees of prudence and imprudence can be justified according to what one chooses to see in the entrails. This is why people who try to make reasonable decisions on pesticides and food additives must rely finally on moral and political judgments. They have no choice. Science cannot say how much prudence is enough.

ELIOT MARSHALL

Eliot Marshall is a writer for *Science* magazine.

A GUIDE TO BULGARIA

The Truth That Killed
by Georgi Markov

(Ticknor & Fields, 304 pp., $15.95)

Until recent years, Bulgaria was seldom in the news. Even now, most stories about the country concern its connection with the attempt to assassinate the Pope in 1980. The shooting in Rome had an old-fashioned style about it; the Soviets and their allies used to dispatch their enemies in individual terror attacks, but one would have thought that the method was no longer in vogue. Even before the Rome attack, however, the West had been warned that individual terror was not passé. In 1978 a certain Bulgarian émigré was shot and killed in London. The case gained notoriety not so much for the killing itself as for its bizarre manner. A minuscule poisoned pellet was ejected from an umbrella tip which the assassin had "accidentally" buried in the victim's leg.

The victim was Georgi Markov. A chemical engineer by training, Markov published his first novel in 1962. Overnight he became an established writer—which in Bulgaria means a writer of the establishment. He "entered the magic circle." Everything was at his disposal: money, an apartment, a car, foreign travel, intimacy with the country's leaders. "As an engineer I could view the Minister of Light Industry from a respectful distance. As a writer I could dine with the Prime Minister."

Eventually, however, Markov came to feel that "the endless chain of compromises" he had to forge engendered within him the very same indifference and ruthlessness that were typical of those he hated. "Even the struggle against compromise was not without compromise." *Prague Spring* was crushed in 1968. His play was banned in 1969. He left the country. Once in the West, he developed different ties with Bulgaria. Working for the overseas broadcasts of the B.B.C., the German Deutsche Welle, and for Radio Free Europe, he told of his experiences. He was warned, but he didn't listen. He was killed. Fortunately for us, however, he wrote these few hundred pages of reminiscences and reflections.

OF THE SOVIET Union's East European satellites, Bulgaria is the least known and, some would say, the least interesting. There has been no Bulgarian Revolution of 1956, no Sofia Spring of 1968; no Bulgarian Solidarity, no Sofia Wall. Nor has Bulgarian foreign policy demonstrated any conspicuous independence. On occasion Bulgaria actually seems to be more Soviet than the Soviets, or, as they say locally, more Turkish than the Sultan. There was a time when censorship kept a watchful eye on even Soviet films. "We cannot allow Soviet works to lower the prestige of the Soviet Union, of the Soviet man!" quoth a local arbiter of matters ideological.

Why this slavishness, and why this lack of any signs of disagreement? Does it perhaps indicate an actual lack of disagreement? The simplest "explanation" takes the long view of history. In 1876, Bulgarians rebelled against their Turkish overlords. The rebellion was crushed, but two years later Russia made war on Turkey. The Bulgarians were liberated. Their gratitude and love for their great brother has simply never abated, goes this explanation. They really are more Soviet than the Soviets.

The myth periodically reappears in journalistic pieces, and even in political science departments. Markov gives it short shrift. "The idea of some sentimental feeling of eternal love and attachment . . . is a tasteless figment of literature." In fact, "this litany about the Bulgarians' eternal love for the U.S.S.R. has become one of the most mendacious, misleading clichés," Markov writes. "It is impossible to forgive the shortsightedness, ignorance, and irresponsible generalizations of Western correspondents" who foster it.

Uncovering the reality requires an-

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other excursion into history. Once upon a time, there was a young nation that had only recently gained its independence. It had adopted a constitution which was among the world's most democratic ones. Most of its population were peasants, on family farms of under twenty-five acres. There were no landed gentry, only a small bourgeoisie and a small proletariat. There was no pronounced massive-scale exploitation. The educational system was accessible, prestigious, and of high quality. The population was relatively homogenous. And it had a terrific sense of humor.

This country, with all the trappings of a Jeffersonian democracy, was Bulgaria after World War I. Democracy, however, failed to function. Politics turned turbulent under the impact of extremist movements (right, left, and irredentist). A failed Communist coup in 1923 was just one event in the gradual degeneration of Bulgaria's democracy. During World War II, Bulgaria sided with the Axis—but never declared war on the Soviet Union. In 1944, it switched alliances and joined the Allies. Still, Soviet troops marched in and sponsored a coalition government including Communists along with anti-Nazi democratic politicians. Within a couple of years, however, the country was completely Sovietized.

SINCE then, Bulgaria has had only three leaders: Georgi Dimitrov, Vulko Chervenkov, and Todor Zhivkov. Dimitrov became famous in 1933, when the Nazis accused him of arson after the Reichstag fire in Berlin. His defense in the subsequent trial was superb. It won him an international reputation and, with Soviet help, freedom and a ticket to Moscow. There he became the general secretary of the Comintern. In 1945, he returned to a "liberated" Bulgaria, but died in 1949. He was succeeded by his brother-in-law, Vulko Chervenkov. Under Chervenkov the social and political system of Communist Bulgaria was perfected. Markov calls it "socialist feudalism." People were mercilessly classified as "ours" or as "enemies." This sorting out, "which surpassed the cruelty of racial discrimination," promoted the system's "basic moral tenet": hatred—better yet, public hatred. "You are not a man if you do not hate!" declares a militia colonel to Markov. Careers were made by "manufacturing evil" for those who were in the way.

The economic morass that ensued was accompanied by commensurate moral decay. "Even the most fanatical party member would have to admit that never before in Bulgaria had there been so much deceit, baseness, adultery, dishonesty, denunciation, betrayal and, particularly, larceny." Markov's episodes describing his various experiences are fresh with detail. He has known both the student lounge and the factory floor, both prison and fame, prostitutes both in body and in character. He tells all. There's a new word to enter our glossary of gulag terms: Belene. It refers to Bulgaria's most dreaded labor camp, located on an island in Danube's estuary. Markov remembers close friends:

> Vassil, who was kept bound with chains for two whole weeks in a boat stuck in the ice of the river during the coldest February; Stamen, confined for several days and nights in a solitary cell with water up to his neck; boys from the Polytechnic who were shot on the spot without reason or sentence.

Vulko Chervenkov was called "little Stalin." But with Stalin's passing, Chervenkov's star waned as well, and during Khrushchev's reign he fell into disgrace. In 1962, he was stripped of all offices and expelled from the party. Markov ran into him two years later. The encounter makes for one of the most poignant anecdotes in the book, one that establishes the difference between propaganda, surface appearances, and the true sentiments of Bulgarians.

It transpires that the hotshots among Sofia's professionals used to congregate in one particular hangout. One memorable night, liquor, blasting rock music, fancy-dress costumes, the summer heat, and dancing, all turned their gathering into pandemonium. In the middle of the riotous bacchanalia, someone spots Chervenkov outside the doorway. Suddenly, dead silence. "Chervenkov understands that he is the focus of unexpected attention and draws himself up facing the bar—a veritable monument to himself." He is stared down by a crowd of people—many of them survivors of Belene—

> who have suffered sleepless nights under interrogation, beatings and tortures, their comrades murdered or broken, years of forced labor behind them. . . . And there, facing them, stands Lucifer himself, who personally unleashed the black force of pain and suffering against them.

"In this electric silence," as Markov tells

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"WARS OF national liberation follow a pretty consistent scenario, which can be divided into four phases: 1) Liberals deny that the rebels are Communist. 2) Liberals insist that there is no hard evidence that the rebels are Communist. 3) Liberals argue that the rebels are essentially indigenous, and that it is incidental whether they are Communist. 4) The new regime announces that it is Communist."
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it, someone intones "Shumi Maritsa": the country's old, pre-Communist, proscribed national anthem about fallen heroes, "the national anthem of *their* Bulgaria, which they sing in bitter honor of the man who once tried to obliterate it in blood." "Never before," adds Markov, "had I known this anthem to sound so powerful and moving."

In 1962, as Markov became a famous writer, Todor Zhivkov ascended to the top leadership. He appeared "almost from nowhere." "Rumor had it that Chervenkov had chosen the most obedient and meekest of his collaborators to succeed him" when he was forced to relinquish leadership. Zhivkov was considered a transitory figure, by Stalinists and liberals alike.

But Zhivkov has endured. Installed during Khrushchev's reign, he outlasted his mentor, as well as Brezhnev and Andropov, and is now serving Chernenko. Markov's insights into Zhivkov's character are very useful for understanding the man. Markov notes that

> any Soviet leadership . . . would always prefer Zhivkov to other candidates. He [is] the toughest, the most quick-witted and—above all—the most loyal. One can say that he served the Soviet Union more zealously than did the Soviet leaders themselves: he was in the forefront of the struggle against the Chinese, he was the first to support Moscow at the time of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the first to express hostility to Eurocommunism, and so on. As a reward for his loyalty he was permitted to say that when the Soviet Communist Party made mistakes, the Bulgarian Communist Party did not.

In personal encounters, Markov found him "undoubtedly superior" to any of the other top leaders, a good listener, a man of "undoubted natural intelligence, quick wit and magnificent memory," a "normal, sincere and sociable person." He comes across as being very cunning.

Zhivkov was an admirer of Khrushchev, but was proud to have stood up to him on occasion (and to have been chewed out for it). He was impatient with the Stalinist relics in the Bulgarian Politburo he had to deal with; in the early years they scotched a number of his ideas. Still, he has managed to make important changes in the country's economic management: opening up the Black Sea as a source of tourist dollars, and more recently, introducing interesting economic reforms.

Zhivkov has reached out to "almost every important social group in Bulgaria, and especially the intelligentsia." This personal attention, "the whole Zhivkov atmosphere," discourages dissent among writers. They are courted and pampered beyond anything their troublesome colleagues in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, or Poland could imagine, and kept quiet. In effect, they are paid *not* to write. What would happen to a would-be Bulgarian Solzhenitsyn? As soon as his name might rise "above the permissible height," quiet pressure would be applied to persuade him to climb down voluntarily. Zhivkov would invite him to lunch or to a hunting trip. "He would listen to him carefully, promise him many things and concede many except the most important—the right to publish his works in their original form."

Thus we gather some answers from Markov's book about real life in Bulgaria. With a sense of perverse relief we find that communism in Bulgaria is as miserable a system as elsewhere. We find that Todor Zhivkov indeed may be more Soviet than the Soviets—but that is not true for Bulgarians at large. We learn about the big juicy carrot that Zhivkov feeds his writers, the most probable dissenters. All this from Markov's book. From his death, we know about Zhivkov's equally big, lethal, stick. Markov was killed for unveiling the dark underside of sunny Bulgaria. But it would be an even greater tragedy—and the final vindication of Zhivkov's obscure methods—if he were remembered more for the umbrella shot than for his vociferous criticism of the regime.

KAREL KOVANDA

Karel Kovanda is a political scientist from Czechoslovakia currently working in private industry in Irvine, California.

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BLOODY SHAMBLES

Piece of Cake
by Derek Robinson

(Knopf, 571 pp., $16.95)

"We see the fighters, the Spitfires and Hurricanes, winging their way above our heads. . . . Our hearts are thrilled at the sight. Who can do them justice, these young champions of civilization? Some day, perhaps, a great poet or dramatist will tell their story worthily; the story of this happy band of brothers," etc. Thus, in 1941, J. M. Spaight, once Principal Assistant Secretary of the British Air Ministry, on the fighter pilots engaged in the Battle of Britain. Such an attitude, and such prose, invite rude deflation, and that is what the British novelist Derek Robinson provides with a vengeance in this energetic and exciting (if not always plausible) novel about a R.A.F. squadron in the bad days. Spaight would be astonished, not to say disheartened, by the way their story gets told here.

For the vantage point from which

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Robinson views these twelve champions is the unillusioned, post-Heller, post-Pynchon 1980s. They appear now as virtual subversives and delinquents, sarcastic wits skilled at insubordination, drunken, sadistic, nutty, scared to death, welcoming as an inestimable benefaction every day clouded over and unfit for flying. "Not what you'd call model citizens," an older officer observes. "More like vandals, I suppose."

ROBINSON traces the fortunes of "Hornet Squadron" from September 1939, to September 1940, from the levities of the Great Bore War to the brutalities of the horrible German raid on London of September 7, 1940. Early on, stationed in France, the squadron meets no German planes. Instead it puts on air shows to raise French morale and delineates with smoke showy fleurs-de-lis in the sky. The pilots enliven their days with schoolboy antics and mortal games of chicken (daring each other to fly under bridges, and the like), colossal drinking bouts, and curiously unskilled seductions. Their engagement in a common enterprise does not prevent their learning largely to despise each other. Tactically, things grow serious as the R.A.F. is hacked up over France, Belgium, and Holland. "Bloody shambles, really," one of the lads concludes. (Of the 261 Hurricanes sent to defend France, only 66 returned to defend England.) Once re-established in southeast England, the pilots become increasingly manic and scandalous. Cut down one by one, they are replaced repeatedly and mechanically until the squadron is unrecognizable: it has been reconstituted almost three times over. In a fine stroke, Robinson contrives that his narrative shall not "end": it simply halts as the few beat-up survivors again attack the apparently unending stream of German bombers over London. So it keeps on going, says the ending.

Lest Robinson garner unearned praise for the bold originality of his skepticism about R.A.F. grandeur, it should be noted that in many ways his book is a fictional redaction of Len Deighton's *Fighter: The True Story of the Battle of Britain* (1977), which likewise deplores the preposterously exaggerated R.A.F. claims of German losses and debunks the myth that harmony reigned among the staff and self-sacrificing decency among the airmen. *Piece of Cake* is also in the tradition of the uningenuous short stories in Roald Dahl's *Over to You* (1945), especially those registering unflinchingly what happens to pilots' bodies when cannon shells explode in their cockpits. One of Dahl's starkest tales, culminating in a mock-unemotional description of a pilot's losing his features to flames, is titled, ironically, "A Piece of Cake."

Robinson's characters are not much more original than his historical revelations. The cast consists of clichés. There are two martinet squadron leaders, obsessed with discipline and neatness. There is the wise and benign older adjutant, out of *Dawn Patrol* by *Command Decision*. There is "Skull," the shrewd intelligence officer who serves as the voice of Robinson's ideological skepticism. "As you can tell, sir," the squadron leader explains to a visiting superior in France, "Hornet is rather a special squadron. We don't go in for stuffy, conventional ideas here. We encourage originality and initiative and so on."

> "Sounds jolly democratic," the group captain said.
> "Well, that's what we're fighting for, after all."
> "Is it?" Skull fumbled for a pen. "Are we? I ought to make a note of that. I thought it was something to do with Poland."

Robinson's statistical skepticism likewise finds its voice in an unconvincing Yank woman journalist, Jacky Bellamy, attached to the squadron, who grows suspicious of the R.A.F.'s German casualty claims and hares about the countryside, comparing the number of wrecked German planes with official figures.

There is another inconvenient Yank with the squadron, one Chris Hart III (clearly a sassy rich boy). His line is impertinent criticism of R.A.F. ways, especially rigid formation flying, costly in the early days. He also thinks the Hurricane not a very good airplane, what with its wooden propeller, fabric wings, and absence of armor behind the pilot's seat. Events finally prove him right about all these things, and the Brits are appropriately humiliated, reminding us that this is, after all, fiction.

But some things Robinson does are more on the mark. Like his constant emphasis of the role of blunders in wartime. Virtually every time it goes aloft, Hornet Squadron is solemnly if inaccurately fired on by Allied antiaircraft, British as well as French, and Robinson takes pains to indicate that this practice is regular, predictable, and, given the force of fear, practically unstoppable. Driving away some German bombers from an Allied convoy in midchannel, the squadron finds "one ship . . . dead in the water, another . . . burning. . . . The destroyers all fired at the Hurricanes." The *all* there is eloquent, characteristic of Robinson's ironic procedures at their best. Early in the novel one of the fighter pilots shoots down a British bomber "by mistake" (actually in terror), and it is not until ciné-guns

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are fitted that the pilots recognize how often they have shot down Hurricanes, mistaking them for Messerschmitts. No wonder the best-selling Penguin during the war (3 million copies) was the little book of silhouettes titled *Aircraft Recognition*.

Robinson performs another service. He does not blink at the details of human destruction, so important to understand if the reader is to participate in the fear felt by the pilots. His clinical accounts are ironically emotionless. The fate of Trevelyan caught by machine-gun fire is typical:

> His left thigh was hit first. The blow was so immense, shattering his thigh-bone, that he threw up his arms and arched his back. The parachute protected his buttocks but the bullets hacked and smashed his lower spine, chopping the great veins and arteries it guarded, perforating the flesh, battering the pelvis, almost breaking the body in half. The last few rounds flicked up through his abdomen, missing the kidneys, hitting the stomach, breaking a few ribs. But by then he was dead.

In a milieu where that sort of thing is commonplace, and where every day you are likely to throw up with disgust or wet your pants with fear, what relief but black humor or broad jokes, often involving toilets? Hence, the constant hectic ragging and joking, the verbal assaults, the unremittingly clever, allusive, gamesmanly chatter. And it's here that the novel fails to justify its P.R., which holds that it is "thoroughly unsentimental" and "savagely honest." Despite his debunking of the chivalric myth and despite his Author's Note at the end arguing the "authenticity" of the proceedings, Robinson romanticizes in other ways. No group of pilots could be so charmingly intelligent and verbal, so gifted at Noël Coward repartee, so tireless in brilliant riposte, parody, and mimicry. Robinson effectively explodes the lie about the special gallantry of the R.A.F. For example, one pilot bails out, leaving his stricken plane to hit a house and kill four people. He explains: "I bailed out because if I'd stayed in the plane I'd have been killed. I don't give a hoot about any civilians." But Robinson adheres to the lie about the pilots' rare charm and visits them with an unbelievable rhetorical resourcefulness and ex post facto cunning. They are too clever and clear-sighted by half. The "fiction" of *Piece of Cake* shows less when the novel delivers images of the gruesome, or of terror, cruelty, and hopelessness, than when it exaggerates the social subtlety of its characters.

But characters (except for "characters") are not Robinson's strong suit. Sheer narrative is, and I defy a reader to put the book down once Robinson has got him into the air and the flak starts flying and the German fighters start wheeling around. Normally the critic, recalling the tedium of Herman Wouk's unreal two-volume, 1,927-page workout, shrinks from the task of encountering another "blockbuster novel about the Second World War," especially if it's longer than the canonical 230 pages. Not here. In his novel about World War I flying, *Goshawk Squadron* (1971), Robinson exhibited his talents as a robust ironist fascinated by the lunatic contingency of war and the universal impulse to rationalize it into some sort of high purpose. Here he's keeping up the good work. And a remarkable thing is that he has no autobiographical contact with his material. He was seven years old when the R.A.F. squadrons were first hustled over to France. He has imagined the war, and he has got it mostly right.

PAUL FUSSELL

THE NEW REPUBLIC'S BEST BOOKS

Following is a list of books TNR *has recently reviewed and recommends.*

Jinnah of Pakistan by Stanley Wolpert (Oxford University Press). The first major biography of the subcontinent's lesser known hero. (Reviewed 5/7/84)

Civil Wars by Rosellen Brown (Knopf). A large, intelligent novel about one family's life in the aftermath of 1960s activism. (5/7/84)

Writing in a State of Siege: Essays on Politics and Literature by André Brink (Summit). The difficult life of art under the rule of apartheid. (4/30/84)

Peter Hall's Diaries: The Story of a Dramatic Battle by Peter Hall (Harper & Row). Hell and heaven at Britain's National Theatre. (4/30/84)

The Black Book of Polish Censorship translated and edited by Jane Leftwich Curry (Random House). An invaluable inside view of the workings of Communist censorship. (4/2/84)

D. W. Griffith: An American Life by Richard Schickel (Simon & Schuster). A comprehensive and conscientious biography—the best ever written—of the director who helped shape film as we now know it. (4/23/84)

Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood by Kristin Luker (University of California Press). A sophisticated sociological analysis of the fierce debate. (4/30/84)

Edisto by Padgett Powell (Farrar, Straus & Giroux). A first novel about coming of age in South Carolina. (4/30/84)

Testing the Current by William McPherson (Simon & Schuster). A midwestern world through the eyes of a watchful little boy. (4/30/84)

Days We Would Rather Know by Michael Blumenthal (Viking). The many moods of a notable new poet. (4/16/84)

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 2*

and militarily to the regimes of cruel, greedy men in Central America, thereby exacerbating the preponderance of poverty and ignorance, and creating fertile ground for the growth of communism.

JUDITH GEER
Buffalo, New York

ONE YEAR AGO IN 'TNR'

To the editors:
A year ago Henry Fairlie told us why the Democrats need to lose in 1984 ("Spare the Rod, Spoil the Party," TNR, April 25, 1983). At the time I thought Mr. Fairlie a bit off his feed, but now he seems to have been uncommonly farsighted. He called our attention to the dominant urge among Democrats to promote themselves as a collection of beleaguered minorities rather than to recover a sense of what all Americans share as a common patrimony. Seeing Mondale as a gentrified party hack and Hart as an opportunist (and the late

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John Glenn as a media-created airhead), Mr. Fairlie worried that a Democrat elected in 1984 would be a befuddled failure and deliver us to the spiritual poverty of the Republicans for another generation. All of this makes more sense to me with every passing day.

HAROLD RIEDL
Baltimore, Maryland

CAPITAL IDEA

To the editors:

Locating our embassy in Jerusalem would indeed be a just act as you comment in "Nothing Doing" (TNR, April 9). Such a move would not only discourage the Arab belligerents from their intransigence. It would also end a slight against Israel and a self-inflicted wound on American prestige, self-respect, indeed, even self-determination, all of which are tarnished when we give a veto to third parties over the location of our embassy in Israel.

"Nothing doing," however, is now also the Reagan Administration's answer to the calls for putting our embassy in the capital of Israel. Our Secretary of State states that the President has kept his head in the matter, declares that we must not aggravate the Arabs. What the President has kept, of course, is a policy of appeasement that will only encourage the intransigent Arab states to view the idea of American national honor as a joke.

DAVID R. ZUKERMAN
Bronx, New York

ON BAKHTIN

To the editors:

I saw with some interest in my review of Joseph Frank's *Dostoevsky: The Years of Ordeal, 1850-1859* in your issue of April 23 the attribution of the status of distinguished twentieth-century Dostoevsky scholar to Mikhail Bakunin. Although I have recently published a book on Bakunin, I have never been able to make such a generous claim for him. The substitution of his name for that of Mikhail Bakhtin evidently occurred in the final proofs, which I had no opportunity to see. One of literary history's great might have beens.

AILEEN KELLY
Cambridge, England

The editors reply:

Our apologies for the glaring misattribution, the result of a copyediting error.

TRB, *from page 4*

more than his Japanese rival. Worse, a midsize car takes 135 worker-hours to build in America, compared to 90 worker-hours in Japan. Labor costs are not the only reason for the auto industry's troubles; sluggish management and the overvalued dollar are also at fault. But without protectionism, the American industry can't compete at present wage levels, let alone higher ones.

Despite their recent "givebacks," American auto workers make 50 percent more than the average U.S. industrial wage. Auto executives are even more comfortable: at the top, they make thirty-eight times an assembly line worker's income, compared to only seven times in Japan. That's why protectionism makes no sense, even from the fairness point of view. The people who pay for government policies that protect income levels in the auto industry (through lost jobs or merely through higher car prices) are, on average, poorer than auto workers. And it's income levels, not jobs, that are being protected. How many more people could be employed if executives and workers cut their wages down to Japanese scale?

During the golden years, the auto companies didn't really care how much they paid people, because each knew the unions would make its competitors pay the same. With international competition, there is no longer this comfort. The crucial question facing liberals is whether their vision of government includes using it to preserve traditional arrangements in places like the auto industry, through techniques like protectionism and bailouts.

Obviously, I think the answer should be no. These devices don't serve the cause of equity, and they disserve the cause of prosperity. We can't get richer as a society by shutting off the borders and paying one another more for everything we make. The more the Democratic Party identifies itself with such schemes, the more it illustrates what Kevin Phillips, the Republican phrasemaker, identified in the April 23 *Washington Post* as a "new brand of American politics: reactionary liberalism." Reactionary liberalism uses government to protect current arrangements not because they are just, but just because they are there. Its tribune, of course, is Walter Mondale.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Inklings of War

BARRY GOLDWATER is a still-spry spaniel whose career now seems to consist of pleasing the Democratic neighbors by occasionally barking at the Republican mailman (but still letting him cross the lawn to deliver the bad news). Two weeks ago Goldwater woofed at C.I.A. Director William Casey about the mining of Nicaragua's harbors and made the cover of *Time* in the process, a sure sign that what he said was essentially reassuring. Yes, Goldwater fulminated that "This is an act violating international law. It is an act of war." But mostly he just wished he had known about these acts of war ahead of time so that he could have defended—or ignored—them: "Bill, how can we back his [President Reagan's] foreign policy when we don't know what the hell he is doing?" he complained. Goldwater was "pissed off" not because the Administration had withheld information but because it had withheld a rationalization for escalating the war against the Sandinistas. Politicians who have not been fed the pat answer to an unpleasant question can be angry beasts. Bow wow.

AS THE UPROAR subsides, the net effect upon official Washington of the mining episode seems negligible. The editorialists' dream that statesmen might wish to debate such an issue as Central America fades before the fact that the Senate has never wished to do anything of the kind—that's why it didn't learn about the mining in the first place. In the House, where some debate on Central America actually does take place, a few inquisitive members were told about the mining (after being sworn to secrecy). Anyone who cares to look can see that the difference between the Reagan policy and actual war is growing unpleasantly theoretical. But few care to look. The implication I got from the *Time* cover was that once the Barry Goldwaters of the world are pacified, there will be no "Policy Collision," and Central America can again be safely stashed in the musty alcoves of the "World" section.

THE POST-MINING headlines are once again innocuous (WAYS EYED TO FOSTER LATIN AIMS goes one in *The Washington Post*). But they miss the drift of Reagan policy. The claim, once repeated ad infinitum, that the United States does not want a "military solution"—that is, a full-scale war instead of a proxy war—is being downplayed. The logic of escalation, of which the mines were vivid expression, is no longer denied. As I write, 350 ships and 30,000 American servicemen are participating in naval maneuvers in the Caribbean. Another 2,600 military personnel are serving on active duty in Honduras, Panama, and El Salvador. If President Reagan wanted the United States to go to war in Central America he could do so at a moment's notice. Only one thing might give him pause; he doesn't think the public wants to. That's why Reagan is said to be preparing to "go to the people" on Central America. Of course, Reagan also has to go to the people in November. If he wins, that may be all he needs to hear.

IT NOW DEVELOPS that the Central Intelligence Agency not only mines Nicaragua's important harbors, it also harbors Nicaragua's important minds. The C.I.A., *The New York Times* reports, now tells Nicaraguan rebel Edén Pastora how to conduct his war against his former Sandinista comrades. In return for following American orders, Pastora gets the kind of help the C.I.A. always denied him when he was less pliable. A few months ago, Pastora came for lunch at TNR. He was an impressive character, emotional, charismatic but also aware of the tensions of being a counterrevolutionary revolutionary. I sympathize with his cause (especially because he continues to declare, "I am very Sandinist, because I am nationalist, anti-imperialist, and opposed to interventions and the expansionist policies of those powers promoting the hegemony of the world"). But it seems to me that the Administration expressed its political preferences when it started shipping $19 million a year to the Somocista-officered *contras* in northern Nicaragua. Back then, Pastora got pocket change. It looks as if Pastora has now decided to accept the bargain which the United States has always offered to Central Americans: you can have Yanqui help, if you play by Yanqui rules. In the unlikely event that the day comes when Pastora seems about to win, I can't imagine that his C.I.A. sponsors would permit him to gain the upper hand on their *contra* favorite sons. I suspect the gringos would decide instead that he had outlived his usefulness. Counterrevolutions devour their children too.

NOT LONG AFTER Pastora visited I tried to invite two other Central Americans, Rubén Zamora and Héctor Oqueli, to lunch. They are an interesting contrast to Pastora. Neither is as left wing as Pastora. In the late 1970s, when Pastora was a guerrilla fighting the U.S.-backed authoritarian regime of Anastasio Somoza in Nicaragua, Zamora and Oqueli were mainstream democratic politicians in El Salvador. Instead of taking up arms, they agitated for free elections. When Pastora—"Comandante Cero"—seized hundreds of hostages at the legally elected Nicaraguan legislature in August 1978, Zamora and Oqueli were still peacefully trying to persuade the Salvadoran military to relax its grip on power. But in 1980 Rubén Zamora's brother Mario, the attorney general of El Salvador, was assassinated in his own home. (No one has ever been arrested for the crime). Only then did Rubén Zamora and Héctor Oqueli, then the country's vice foreign minister, (and scores of other Salvadoran democrats) give up. They joined the alliance with the Salvadoran guerrillas to overthrow the government they could not save. I had met Zamora two years ago, when he was the chief diplomatic spokesman in North America for the Salvadoran guerrillas. Like Pastora, he seemed shrewd and reflective about the tensions inherent in his alliance. An interesting man. But when I recently called up the F.D.R.-F.M.L.N. office in Washington to inquire about inviting Zamora to our offices, I was told that, even though he has visited this country many times before, he has been denied entry. I said we'd be pleased to talk with Héctor Oqueli instead. (Oqueli used to be the secretary for Latin America of the Socialist International.) After the Salvadoran elections a few weeks ago, I got a call. Oqueli has been shut out as well. If we're going to give Edén Pastora shoulder-held grenade launchers, can't we at least give Rubén Zamora and Héctor Oqueli visas?

J.M.

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Are "schoolboy scuffles" in the White House damaging Reagan's chances to achieve world peace?

"My frankness may startle."

When Alexander M. Haig, Jr., became U.S. Secretary of State, he saw in President Reagan "a figure who possessed great gifts of leadership—an honest mind, a good heart, a sound conception of America, and the common touch."

Today, "it remains my hope as an American that history will have reason to call Reagan great."

But "staff mischief," Haig believes, may prevent it.

And so, saddened and alarmed, he has written his *Caveat*.

"My frankness may startle," Haig predicts.

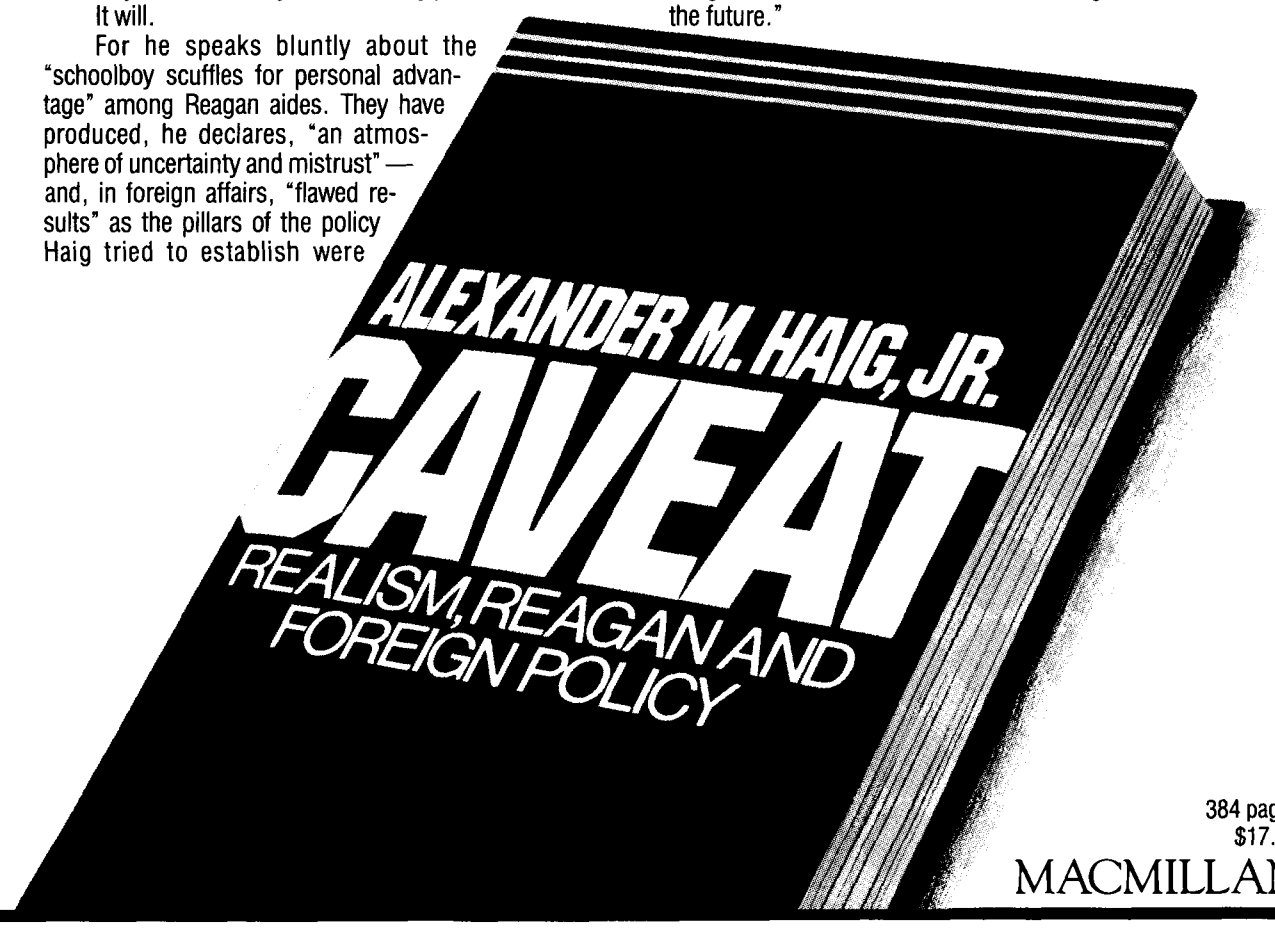
It will.

For he speaks bluntly about the "schoolboy scuffles for personal advantage" among Reagan aides. They have produced, he declares, "an atmosphere of uncertainty and mistrust"—and, in foreign affairs, "flawed results" as the pillars of the policy Haig tried to establish were "shaken by the Samsons of populism and petty ambition."

Haig's account of his stormy tenure as Secretary of State is salted with wit and graced with thoughtful insights, as he discusses the AWACS controversy...China...Poland...the Falklands crisis...and the "mixed signals" that bedeviled our Lebanon experience.

He is forthright—and often surprising—in describing his relationships with Caspar Weinberger, James Baker, Jeane Kirkpatrick, and other Reagan appointees. And he provides his definitive account of the controversial "I am in control here" episode when Reagan was shot.

Alexander Haig's *Caveat* is more than a warning. It is a bold statement of purpose—one man's view of the direction America's foreign policy must take, and what Ronald Reagan must do, if he "wishes to be among the makers of the future."



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